

LENINGRAD BATTLE Vladimir Beshanov

2

There was no defense!

Great Patriotic War: Unknown War

Vladimir Beshanov Zh

Leningrad massacre

TERRIBLE TRUTH 0 BLOCKADE

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The most "inconvenient" and scandalous book of the popular historian. Continuation of the bestsellers "Bloody Red Army" and "Tank Pogrom of 1941". A new look at the tragedy of the Leningrad Blockade. The terrible truth about the longest and most brutal battle of the Great Patriotic War, which lasted more than two years and claimed millions of lives. Refuting the official Soviet version of the "defense of Leningrad", this book proves that in fact there was no defense, that the battle for Leningrad was "one continuous offensive of the Red Army, unthinkable bloody, unsuccessful, often meaningless. The troops of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts participating in this massacre never defended themselves. They kept advancing. Attacking for months in the same directions, the Soviet armies suffered huge losses, which increased tenfold due to the lack of training of our troops, the poor professional training of father commanders and disregard for human life. The battle for Leningrad lasted three years and cost us three million killed, missing, and wounded servicemen. Another million died in the city itself..." This book sheds light for the first time on the most terrible massacre of the Second World War, which in terms of losses surpassed even the infamous "Rzhev meat grinder" – until now, the vicinity of Leningrad, where millions of people died. of our fighters, are a huge cemetery covering the city within a radius of tens of kilometers ... UDC 355/359

BBC 68

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FOREWORD

BLOCKADE is a special form of warfare, which consists in isolating a blockaded object by violating its external relations. The goals of blockades are: to force the enemy to surrender, to undermine the military and economic power of the enemy state, to deplete the forces and means of the blockaded grouping of the enemy's armed forces and create favorable conditions for its subsequent defeat and capture of the object of the blockade.

Everyone knows that the city on the Neva was going to be strangled with a blockade. Not even to take possession, but simply to destroy without accepting surrender. Many books have been written about besieged Leningrad, mainly about the resilience of its inhabitants, about bombing, shelling, hunger, the Road of Life, about joy

breakthrough and increase in bread rations. But there is very little intelligible information about the military aspects of the Leningrad battle, with the exception of the first phase of Operation Iskra.

The German army, by definition, applied a "special form" of warfare, it established a blockade. And what did the Red Army do? To say that "the defense of Leningrad" is incorrect, again, according to the classical definition given by Professor A.I. Ver Khovskiy: "A battle is called defensive, when the troops, having settled down on the spot, voluntarily give up the initiative of action to the enemy and, due to the time won in this way, produce:

5

fire organization; 2) strengthening the terrain and camouflage; 3) preparation of counter strikes. Such a preliminary organization makes it possible to tie up large enemy forces with smaller forces, and use the forces freed by defense to deliver a decisive blow where the senior commander wants to achieve victory.

Near Leningrad, everything was the opposite: the Soviet troops did not stand still, they did not concede the initiative to the enemy and possessed forces much larger than the enemy.

The "War for Leningrad" is a battle unique in its kind, it is one continuous offensive, unthinkably bloody, unsuccessful, often meaningless. Participation in this war, the troops of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts never defended themselves. They were continuously advancing, and the Germans carried on a "defensive battle" for the most part, tying up "large enemy forces". For months, the Soviet armies attacking in the same directions in the same directions always outnumbered the enemy and, quite in accordance with military theory, suffered heavy losses. These losses increased tenfold due to the untrainedness of our troops, the poor disregard for human life. The "senior chiefs" really wanted to achieve victory, so the battle lasted three years and cost us three million killed, missing, and injured servicemen. Another million died during this time in the city itself.

The secret of how they did it, our most eminent commanders took with them to the grave, and Soviet historians wrote "stories" based on their memoirs, from which you can learn stories about the heroism of the Red Army soldiers who cut down German tanks with an ax along with the crews or under heavy fire, they were looking for a lost party card in the neutral zone, but sometimes it is even difficult to make out with whom this general fought. Most of them, one gets the impression, were pacifists in life and, carried away by their careers, had little interest in military affairs. For example, General Popov, commanding

6

As a member of the 70th Army, "Bagration" remembered all the stages of the operation only from the banquets organized in honor of the liberation of this or that city.

Only in the last decade, a number of documents on the subject of the Leningrad sitting were published, and the memoirs of participants in the events from that side were translated. And relatively recently, thanks to modern St. Petersburg enthusiasts, it became possible to see the war from below, "from the point of view of a soldier crawling on his belly through front-line mud, and sometimes sticking his nose into this mud." There are few of them left, but those who remain hope that we will hear them.

Chapter 1 THE DESTRUCTION OF THE RKKA IN THE BALTICS

(June - August 1941)

As is known, the Barbarossa plan provided for the simultaneous application of crushing blows in three strategic directions: Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev. Wherein

the capture of Leningrad and the capture of the coast of the Baltic Sea was considered as the most important goal of the offensive of the Wehrmacht.

The Nazi leadership, seeking to seize the "cradle of the Russian revolution", took into account not only the strategic, but also the enormous political and economic importance of the city on the Neva. Here were the leading factories of the most important industries, including machine building, aircraft engine, radio engineering, shipbuilding, tank, electromechanical, optical and others. Approximately 75% of manufactured products accounted for the defense complex. In addition, Leningrad was also the largest transport hub. Success in this direction allowed the Germans to achieve dominance in a vast region from the Baltic to Scandinavia, provided sea routes for the export of Swedish ore and Finnish nickel to the Reich, and established contact on the land theater with a potential ally in the war - Finland.

For the attack on Leningrad in East Prussia, Army Group North was deployed under the command of Field Marshal Ritter Wilhelm von Leeb in

8

consisting of the 18th and 16th field armies and the 4th tank group. Group "North" had 29 divisions, including 3 tank and 3 motorized divisions, in which there were 787 thousand personnel, 8348 guns and mortars, 679 tanks and assault guns. The actions of the ground forces were to be supported by 830 aircraft of the 1st Air Fleet of Colonel-General Keller, including 203 fighters and 271 bombers. Directive No. 21 of December 18, 1940, von Leeb's troops were tasked with destroying the Red Army units stationed in the Baltic States and, having captured the ports of the Baltic Sea, Leningrad and Kronstadt, deprive the Soviet fleet of strongholds. As part of this task, Army Group North delivered the main blow in the direction of Dvinsk (Daugavpils), pushing its reinforced right wing as quickly as possible to the area northeast of Opochka in order to prevent the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the Baltic. Part of the forces of Army Group Center deployed in East Prussia were also involved in delivering the initial strike in the northwestern direction: two army corps of the 9th Field Army and the 3rd Panzer Group.

The entire German grouping, concentrated on the border of Lithuania, consisted of 43 divisions, including 7 tank and 6 motorized, over 13 thousand guns and mortars, about 1500 tanks and more than 1000 aircraft.

On the Soviet side, Army Group North was opposed by the troops of the Baltic Special Military District under the command of Colonel General F.I. Kuznetsov, who until 1941 did not command anything higher than the regiment, who made up the North-Western Front with the beginning of the war. In his 8th and 27th armies there were 25 divisions, including 4 tank and 2 mechanized, 1 rifle and 3 airborne brigades - 440 thousand people, 7467 guns and mortars, 1514 tanks, 1814 aircraft.

Three groups were deployed on the territory of Eastern Finland: the German army "Norway", the Finnish South-Eastern and Karelian armies. The Germans were supposed to advance on the Ukhta, Kandalaksha and Murmansk

9

directions, and the Finns - on the Karelian Isthmus and to the north of it, in order to unite with the troops of the Army Group "North" in the Leningrad region and on the Svir River. The Finnish units were also entrusted with the liquidation of the Soviet base on the Hanko Peninsula and the cover of the army "Norway" from the south. In total, 21.5 settlement divisions were concentrated in Finland, in which there were 407.5 thousand people, 3084 guns and mortars, 192 tanks and 424 aircraft of the 5th Air Fleet and the Finnish Air Force (however, the participation of the Finns in the war against the Soviet Union was still in question).

Thus, the German command expected to capture Leningrad with a double blow: from the north - by Finnish troops, from the south - by the forces of the German army group "North". At the same time, the German General Staff understood that the available forces of the Wehrmacht might not be enough for successful operations at once in all strategic directions. Since Hitler considered the capture of Leningrad an "urgent task", the plan "Barbarossa" included the idea of stopping the offensive of the Army Group "Center" at the turn of the Dnieper and transferring part of its forces to the north for the victorious completion of the operation to capture the Northern Lyceum of the USSR, The attack on Moscow - the dream of the German generals - was not planned before the capture of Leningrad. .

The defense of the "city named after the great Lenin" from land, primarily from encroachments by the "fascist" Finland, was to be provided by the troops of the Leningrad Military District under the command of Lieutenant General M.M. Popov. They numbered 15 rifle divisions, the average staffing of which was 12 thousand people and was significantly higher than in other border districts. The artillery units of the rifle formations were fully staffed with personnel and military equipment. On the eve of the war, the district had 436 thousand soldiers and commanders, 9599 guns and mortars, it included the 1st and 10th mechanized corps. The armored forces in June 1941 numbered 1,857 tanks and 514 armored vehicles, and the air force

10

forces - 2104 aircraft. In addition, 656 aircraft of the Air Force of the Baltic Fleet (including 172 bombers and 353 fighters) and 115 aircraft of the Northern Fleet were in the northwestern direction. Six artillery regiments of the 2nd Air Defense Corps, covering Leningrad, were armed with about 600 new 85-mm anti-aircraft guns. Two fighter divisions (3rd and 54th) allocated for the city's air defense consisted of 200 aircraft. On June 19, the formation of the 7th Air Defense Air Corps began from parts of fighter aviation.

The Baltic Fleet included 2 battleships, 2 cruisers, 2 leaders, 21 destroyers, 66 submarines, 6 minelayers, 33 minesweepers, 7 patrol ships, 48 torpedo boats and a number of auxiliary vessels. There were 424 large-caliber guns in the coastal defense. The air defense system of the fleet had 352 guns. All this economy was led by Vice Admiral V.F. Tributs, who after two years of purge in the armed forces stepped from the bridge of the destroyer to the position of commander of the fleet, "along the way" was noted at headquarters posts, is the fourth flagship in four and a half pre-war years. Comrade Stalin was not afraid to boldly bring forward new cadres, as well as to move them without hesitation.

In general, our forces were considerable, and the stories of the Soviet marshals about the quantitative superiority of the enemy are fairy tales for Soviet citizens, from whom the above figures were hidden for half a century as the greatest state secret. For this reason, the former Chief of the General Staff, Marshal A.M. Vasilevsky could speak authoritatively about "whole armadas of fascist aviation" and the threefold superiority of Army Group "North" with 679 tanks and 830 aircraft over the Baltic district, having 1514 tanks and 1814 aircraft. It was necessary to somehow explain why the beginning of the war for the troops of both the North-Western Front and the entire "invincible and legendary" was marked by a series of catastrophic defeats.

By the end of June 22, 1941, the Germans, having advanced 20-70 km, captured the crossings over the Neman. The Soviet defense turned out to be broken in several directions, the communication system was broken, and the centralized command and control of troops was lost. The troops of General F.I. Kuznetsova, who were not oriented in the real situation and did not interact with each other, tried to implement the pre-war plans for the liberation of foreign proletarians from the oppression of the local capitalists and landowners. Aviation, instead of supporting ground forces, carried out raids on targets in East Prussia and, in the conditions of a well-organized enemy air defense system, suffered heavy losses. The mechanized corps received an order to launch a counterattack in the zone of the 8th Army, Colonel General P.P. Sobennikova along the Siauliai-Tilsit highway, In a three-day oncoming battle with the 41st motorized corps of General Georg Reinhardt (1st and 6th tank, 36th motorized, 269th infantry divisions - about 400

tanks), the Soviet 12th and 3rd mechanized corps, operating without the support of infantry, aviation, logistic support and communication with each other, were defeated, losing almost 1300 tanks. The report of the head of the armored-tank directorate of the North-Western Front dated July 2 said: "The 3rd mechanized corps does not exist. The remnants of the 12th mechanized corps and the remnants of the personnel of the 3rd mechanized corps must be led together, placing them in the area of the city of Luga for a new formation.

Having defeated the Soviet units, Reinhardt threw his corps to the Dvina.

Divisions of the 11th Army, Lieutenant General V.I. Morozov also could not withstand the concentrated blow of armored fists. The army, having suffered heavy losses and cut into two parts, began to roll back to the northeast. The direction Kaunas, Dvinsk turned out to be practically without cover. The 8th Panzer and 3rd Motorized Division from the 56th Corps of General Erich von Manstein, numbering about 200 tanks, penetrated here.

12

Under pressure from the formations of the 4th Panzer Group, supported by bomber aircraft, the troops of the Northwestern Front retreated in divergent directions: divisions of the 8th Army - to Riga, parts of the 11th Army - to Sventyany, Disna. It was necessary to carry out urgent measures to organize defense on the Western Dvina River and eliminate the breakthrough in the central sector of the front.

It was decided to organize the defense at the turn of the Dvina by the forces of the army of General Sobennikov and the 27th Army advanced from the depths under the command of Major General N.E. Berzarin. According to the order of the front commander, the 8th Army, which included the remnants of the 10th, 11th rifle corps and the 202nd mechanized division, were to take up defensive positions on the line from Riga to Livani. To the left from Livani to Kraslava, formations of the 16th Rifle Corps retreated. In order to unite the actions of these formations, the commander of the front decided to push forward the command of the 27th army with service units. The headquarters of General Berzarin moved by car to the Rezekne region and, on the evening of June 28, took command of units in the Daugavpils direction. From the Moscow military district, the Headquarters transferred here the understaffed 21st mechanized corps of Major General D.D. Lelyushenko - "only" 175 tanks and 129 guns. However, General Berzarin did not have time to organize the defense before the enemy approached.

Already on the morning of June 26, on the fourth day of the war, the 8th Panzer Division of General Brandenberger, having overcome about 400 km, broke through to Daugavpils, captured two large bridges across the Western Dvina intact and occupied a bridgehead on the right bank. The next day, the 3rd motorized division of General Yan crossed the river. On June 28, the Germans successfully repulsed the counterattack of Lelyushenko's corps and the 5th Airborne Corps thrown into the "infantry battle", pushing them 40 km from Daugavpils. General Manstein tried with all his heart to continue the dashing raid on the Soviet rear, but the commander of the tank group ordered him to stop. Hoepner feared that the 56th

13

the current corps, separated from the main German forces by 100-130 km, may be surrounded, and therefore decided to wait for the troops of the 16th army of Oberst General Ernst Busch and the Reinhardt corps to reach the Dvina.

Until June 29, the enemy did not conduct active combat operations in the defense zone of the 8th Army, pulling up troops to the Western Dvina. Separate Soviet units broke through to the east, in particular, the remnants of the 12th mechanized corps, which still had about 40 tanks, retreated across the river in the Riga area. The headquarters of the corps, having lost contact with the high command and its own units, was surrounded that day in the forests south of Borisel and destroyed by the Germans. Corps commander Major General N.M. Shestopalov was taken prisoner and died of his wounds on August 6 in a POW camp in Siauliai.

On June 29, the 41st Motorized Corps crossed the Dvina near Krustpils. And on June 30, the advanced detachment of the 26th Army Corps of the 18th Army, Oberst General Georg von Kuchler, captured the bridges in Riga. All this extremely complicated the position of the 8th Soviet Army, which retreated to the right bank more slowly than the enemy advanced. | July the Germans occupied Riga.

In the period from June 29 to July 1, the command of the Army Group "North" accumulated forces on the bridgeheads for the subsequent offensive and put the formations in order. According to the order of the Supreme Command of the Ground Forces (OKH), formations of the 4th Panzer Group were to launch a swift offensive through Rezekne in the direction of Ostrov and Pskov in order to cut off the retreat of the Soviet troops south of Lake Peipsi. Manstein's corps during this time was completely concentrated in the Daugavpils region, including the third motorized formation - the SS division "Dead Head"; Reinhardt Corps - in the Krustpils area. At the same time, the infantry of the 18th and 16th armies pulled up to the Dvina. In total, at the end of June, there were 25 divisions in Army Group North, including 3 security divisions that were part of the 101st rear corps.

14

It would seem that the command of the North-Western Front had the opportunity to strengthen their positions and organize a strong defense behind the water barrier. Manstein feared this most of all: "... six days have already passed since the sudden raid of the corps on Daugavpils. The enemy had time to overcome the shock that he received when German tanks appeared on the eastern bank of the Dvina. However, the Soviet command made one otnibka after another. At first, the troops of the 24th and the 41st rifle corps detached from the Headquarters reserve on June 29 were ordered to concentrate in the areas of Vilyaka, Ostrov, to be understaffed and to be ready to launch a counterattack on Daugavpils in order to restore the defense of the 27th Army along the Western Dvina. The next day, this decision was canceled and another was adopted. Kuznetsov gave the order to retreat to the Pskov, Ostrov and Sebezh fortified regions. The troops began to carry out this order. Apparently, this was the most correct decision in this situation.

On July 1, the Germans did not conduct active hostilities. Soviet front-line intelligence reported that the number of enemy troops on the Daugavpils bridgehead was about an infantry division reinforced with tanks. Upon learning of this and taking into account the requirements of the Headquarters to eliminate enemy bridgeheads, General Kuznetsov canceled his order of June 30 and again ordered the troops to prepare for the offensive, which was to begin on July 2. Nine hours were allotted for preparation, the starting position for the Impact had to be taken by 10 o'clock in the morning. The 8th Army was to liquidate the Krustpils bridgehead, the 27th - to destroy the enemy in the Daugavpils area.

In the armies, first of all, measures were taken to stop the withdrawal of troops and return units to the line of the Western Dvina in the areas previously occupied by them. On the morning of July 2, the troops of the front were still on the move and were not ready either for the offensive or for defense. At 5 o'clock in the morning, with the support of all aviation, the Germans struck. As a result, the Soviet armies did not manage to gain a foothold at the turn

15

the Western Dvina River, their remnants with rearguard battles retreated in divergent directions: the 8th Army - to Estonia, the 27th - to the east, to the Velikaya River, the 11th - in the Nevel area. The complete defeat of the North-Western Front was coming to an end. A gap appeared in the direction of Pskov, into which the 4th Panzer Group rushed. By the end of the day the German mobile formations, advancing along the Daugavpils-Ostrov highway, reached the area 20-25 km south of Rezekne and occupied the city the next day.

Following the development of events in this direction, on June 29, the Headquarters of the High Command instructed to organize defenses at the turn of the Velikaya River in advance and firmly close

direction to Leningrad. She ordered to concentrate in the areas of Pskov, Ostrov, Porkhov 22, 24, 41st rifle and 1st mechanized corps. Relying on the fortified areas, these formations were to prepare a solid defense in the Leningrad direction.

1st mechanized corps, commanded by Major General M.L. Cherniavsky, was fully equipped and initially had 1039 tanks. However, by the time of the deployment of hostilities in the Pskov-Ostrov direction, it was torn apart and lost its importance as a large mobile unit. His 1st Red Banner Tank Division was transferred to the Northern Front, and the 163rd Mechanized Division was reassigned to the command of the 27th Army. In fact, General Chernyavsky had only the 3rd Panzer Division of Major General I.M. Kuznetsov, located in the forests 20 km northwest of Pskov, but from its composition one tank and one mechanized regiment were transferred to the 41st Rifle Corps.

41 Corps under the command of General I.S. Kosobutsky, consisting of the 90th, 111th, 118th, and 235th rifle divisions, began unloading at the stations of Pskov, Karamyshevo, and Cherskaya on July 1. At the end of the concentration, he was supposed to take the Staro-Pskov, Novo-Pskov and Ostrovsky fortified areas. All his divisions were fully equipped

16

They were made up of personnel, but, like the vast majority of Red Army formations, they did not have engineering equipment and means of communication, in any case, there were not a single radio station. The 22nd Rifle Corps concentrated in the area of Porkhov, the 24th in the area of Ostrov.

On the evening of July 3, General Sobennikov unexpectedly received an order with a motorcyclist to take command of the North-Western Front. The 8th Army was received from him by Lieutenant General F.S. Ivanov. On the same day, Lieutenant General N.F. Vatutin. The former command perished in the encirclement, and nothing was known about its fate. Later it turned out that Colonel-General F.I. Kuznetsov survived and at the end of July got out to his own.

In the meantime, Göpner's tank group split up: Manstein's corps, having transferred the 3rd motorized division to the subordination of General Reinhardt, sharply turned in the direction of Sebezh, Opochka; The 41st Motorized Corps attacked Ostrov. The Germans won at a pace: only the 154th separate machine-gun battalion and the 398th rifle regiment of the 118th division, which did not have artillery, grenades, anti-tank mines, occupied the defense in the Ostrovsky region. The 235th rifle division was supposed to arrive here, but its echelons, following from Ivanovo, were delayed on the way. Meanwhile, on the morning of July 4, Lieutenant General Kirchner's 1st Panzer Division reached the southern outskirts of Ostrov, crossed the Velikaya River on the move, and captured the city by evening. The maneuver was greatly facilitated by the fact that the Russians again did not have time to blow up the road and railway bridges captured by German motorcyclists. The Soviet units, entering the battle from the wheels, were unable to resist the enemy and hastily left their defensive positions. At that time, the 56th motorized corps, with difficulty overcoming the swampy terrain, advanced towards the Sebezh fortified area, in which parts of the 21st mechanized corps of General Lelyushenko were entrenched.

After assessing the situation, Sobennikov ordered the commanders of the 41st Rifle and 1st Mechanized Corps

17

at dawn on July 5, destroy the German units in the Ostrov area and restore defenses along the Velikaya River. General Vatutin warned General Kosobutsky in a telephone conversation: "Keep in mind that the liquidation and destruction of the enemy are assigned personally to you, under your personal responsibility. You are responsible for the fulfillment of this order with your head. To solve the task, the 468th rifle regiment of the 111th division and the 3rd tank division with heavy vehicles KV-1 and KV-2.

At 16.00, Soviet tankers broke into the city, putting the enemy to flight. The next day, the fighting in the Ostrov region flared up with renewed vigor and became even more fierce. However, according to already established tradition, the red commanders did not organize interaction, as a result of which they fought in isolation from each other. That is, tanks without infantry, infantry without tanks, and each on its own. Therefore, they failed to consolidate their success. Tankers broke into Ostrov twice, lost 140 combat vehicles in the attacks, but could not hold it without the support of infantry formations. The Germans, pulling up additional forces, broke the resistance of the bloodless Soviet units on July 6 and forced them to withdraw. The [th Panzer Division began to move rapidly towards Pskov, and the 6th — towards Porkhov.

In a memorandum addressed to a member of the Military Council of the North-Western Front, Krasnaya Zvezda correspondent M. Kosarev wrote: "... the commander of the 5th tank regiment, Posenchuk, spoke about the battle for Ostrov. From his story it follows that the Germans have very few forces in the Ostrov direction and that the capture of the city by our units failed only because the 111th Infantry Division shamefully deserted from the battlefield, its commanders fled first, arguing buttonholes and removing signs differences. There are a lot of our forces under the Island, but they all act separately, without any interaction.

After leaving the Island, our divisions retreated to Pskov. On July 7, German tanks managed to break through the battle formations of Kosobutsky's corps and rapidly advance to the southern outskirts of the city. For liquidation

18

After this breakthrough, the Soviet command on the morning of July 8 ordered the 41st Rifle and 1st Mechanized Corps to launch a counterattack and destroy the enemy. However, while they were preparing for a counterattack, the German troops resumed their offensive at 12 noon. Formations of the 41st Motorized Corps collapsed on the units of the 41st Rifle Corps, which were forced to randomly retreat across the Velikaya River. By this time, the artillery of the Soviet rifle divisions was left without ammunition, the personnel were demoralized by the sight of the rear of the 8th and 27th armies retreating to the east through their battle formations and often arbitrarily left their positions, joining the fugitives. The situation was aggravated by impunity for the actions of enemy aircraft. The remnants of the 1st mechanized corps retreated to Porkhov,

The Germans perpetrated this entire pogrom with the forces of three divisions!

True, they failed to break into Pskov on the move. This time, the Russians managed to blow up the bridges over the Velikaya River and its tributaries, without even waiting for the departure of their units. The units of the 118th, 111th rifle divisions and the 25th fortified area that remained on the western bank, abandoning all equipment, crossed the river using improvised means. There could no longer be any talk of any organized defense.

On July 8, General Sobennikov ordered the troops of the front to go over to a stubborn defense at the line of the Pskov fortified area - the Velikaya River - the Cherekha River - OPOCHKA. At the same time, he demanded the creation of groupings on the flanks of the Porkhov direction in order to launch a counterattack in order to destroy the enemy that had broken through. Such maneuvers in Soviet military science were called "active defense". General V.I. Morozov, who had already lost all the troops of the 11th Army, was ordered to arrive at Dno on July 9 and unite the efforts of the 41st, 22nd Rifle and 1st Mechanized Corps under his command.

And again the Germans were ahead. By the evening of July 9, Reinhardt's motorized corps bypassed Pskov from the east and began to develop an offensive on Luga. The uncontrolled troops of the 41st Soviet Corps fled. Its broken

19

The military units that had lost contact with higher headquarters were discovered by the command only on July 13 near Struga Krasny and Luga.

Moreover, the troops of the North-Western Front retreated with such enviable speed that the thoughtful enemy perceived their actions as a well-thought-out and well-practiced maneuver. General Erhard Raus wrote:

"Usually, when the Russians were defeated on a wide front, they restored their lines only by retreating a considerable distance. They moved very quickly, even if they retreated in large numbers... When they decided to retreat, they did it in one jerk, and then immediately switched to active defense. When our panzer divisions broke through the front and began pursuit along the roads, the Russians very skillfully disappeared over rough terrain. Stepping back, they broke away and quickly gathered together again. Therefore, Russians can be considered masters of retreats. For example, south of Leningrad, the 6th Panzer Division captured several prisoners from the same regiments of the 125th Rifle Division, which we first encountered when we crossed the border at Taurog. The Russians managed to retreat 500 miles!"

However, the high Soviet authorities did not appreciate the "retreat skill" of their troops. General I.S. Kosobutsky and the commander of the 118th Infantry Division, Major General N.M., who was in charge of the defense of Pskov. Glovatsky "for cowardice, inaction of the authorities, the collapse of command and control, the surrender of weapons to the enemy without a fight and the unauthorized abandonment of military positions" went to the tribunal - to answer with his head.

By this time, it became clear that Manstein with two divisions could not break through the Sebezh fortified area, and his troops were transferred back to the Ostrov region.

The fall of Pskov meant that Army Group North had successfully completed the first half of its strategic mission by invading mobile formations within the boundaries of the Leningrad Region. Battle in the Baltic

20

which was attended by 40 Soviet divisions, including 7 tank and 4 mechanized, was lost by the Red Army outright. Its losses amounted to almost 90 thousand people (mostly prisoners), 2523 tanks (140 vehicles per day), 3651 guns and mortars, 990 combat aircraft. The Soviet troops retreated 400-450 km, the ships of the Baltic Fleet were forced to relocate from Libava and Ventspils to Tallinn.

On July 8, 1941, a meeting of the Supreme High Command of the German Armed Forces (OKW) was held at the Headquarters of the Fuhrer, at which one of the main issues discussed was the issue of the Wehrmacht attack on Leningrad and the start of the offensive of the Finnish troops from the north. Hitler approved the plan of further action proposed by the Chief of the General Staff of the Ground Forces, Colonel-General Franz Halder, while emphasizing the need to cut off Leningrad from the east and southeast by the forces of General Hoepner's 4th Panzer Group. It was at this meeting that the Fuhrer announced his firm decision "to level Moscow and Leningrad to the ground in order to prevent the population that we will have to feed in the winter to remain there." The destruction of the two capitals of Russia, according to Hitler, symbolized the victory of the "superior race" and was supposed to inflict an irresistible moral and psychological blow on the hearts of the "subhumans", cause "a national disaster that will deprive the centers not only of Bolshevism, but of Russians in general."

In the face of the immediate threat of the enemy's access to Leningrad, the Soviet Headquarters decided to enlist part of the forces of the Northern Front to protect the southwestern and southern approaches to the city. July 4, General M.M. Popov received an order to organize a defense in depth along the Luga River from the Gulf of Finland to Lake Ilmen. The Stavka demanded that a foreground 10-15 km deep with solid barriers be created at this line, leaving only the escape routes for the troops of the North-Western Front. By July 10, the 177th

21

and 191st Rifle, 24th Tank Divisions, 1st Separate Mountain Rifle Brigade, Leningrad Rifle and Machine Gun and Infantry Schools and almost all artillery regiments

RGCs, united in the Luga Operational Group, headed by Deputy Front Commander Lieutenant General K.P. Pyadyshev. According to the memoirs of Marshal of Artillery G.F. Odintsov, Konstantin Pavlovich Pyadyshev - "a talented military leader strictly adhered to the Suvorov principles of training troops, had an exceptional gift of intuition and foresight, which are so important in battle", - having advanced forward detachments to the Plyussa River, he immediately began to create strong barriers on the Kiev highway and on both sides of the Warsaw railway.

The Luga group also included units of the 41st Rifle Corps retreating to the north. In order to centralize the combat activities of aviation, the air forces of the Northern and Northwestern Fronts, the Baltic Fleet and the 7th Air Defense Air Corps were subordinated to a single command represented by General A.A. Novikov.

Since July 10, the leadership of the military operations of the Northern, North-Western Fronts, the Baltic and Northern Fleets has been carried out by the High Command of the North-Western Direction, headed by "First Marshal" K.E. Voroshilov. The headquarters of the direction was hastily put together mainly from the teachers of the academies.

As early as June 27, 1941, the Military Council of the Northern Front adopted a resolution on the involvement of residents of Leningrad and its suburbs in labor service. Each Leningrader of "both sexes" not associated with military production was sent to the construction of defensive structures. About 150 thousand people worked daily. Evasion of labor service was punishable by six months in prison or a fine of up to 3,000 rubles.

The main burden in the creation of fortifications fell on the shoulders of women. They dug trenches, trenches, anti-tank ditches and scarps, arranged forest blockages.

22

German pilots scattered leaflets over them: "Ladies! Don't dig holes! All the same, our tanks will pass! According to the memoirs of the party propagandist A.D. Okorokov, the leaflets caused laughter. So the commissar-general spats straight away: women who have left their children at home are digging an anti-tank ditch with shovels and picks. Near Leningrad. In shoes. German planes fly over them, sometimes they drop leaflets, more often bombs. The defeated Soviet divisions are passing by, fleeing from the German "tanochki". Everyone is having fun: "Under Luga I was surrounded by laughing women ... I also couldn't help but laugh."

Barricades were erected on the streets, all civil construction projects were curtailed in order to direct human and technical resources to the creation of military engineering facilities, primarily the Luga defense line. On the near approaches to the city from the south-west and south, the Krasnog Vardeisky and Slutspko-Kolpinsky fortified areas were built, and the Karelian UR was improved in the north. A belt of fortifications with knots of resistance was also created along the Peterhof-Pulkovo line.

Along with the conscription of those liable for military service, from June 29, an accelerated creation of a people's volunteer corps of 200 thousand people was launched to help the personnel units of the Leningrad Army. The military council of the front initially asked for 100,000 "physically hardy and politically reliable" volunteers aged 18 to 35. Leningrad party leader and member of the Military Council of the direction A.A. Zhdanov, with his own hand, doubled the "quota", and the age up to 50 years. Being well informed, he learned the price of the combat readiness of the Red Army and the slogan about the victory with "little bloodshed" in the Finnish campaign. Soviet generals in the 1930s were brought to commendable obedience and uniformity, brought up in boundless devotion to the cause of Lenin and Stalin, but they knew only one tactic - to fill the enemy with the blood of the Red Army up to the very nostrils.

23

The Military Council and the headquarters of LANO were organized. Major General A.I. Sub- boots. On July 4, it was decided to form 15 divisions of the people's militia with a numerical strength of 12,000 people and immediately send them to the front. The responsibility for the selection of volunteers was assigned to the district committees of the party. K. On July 10, 110 thousand people were recruited. Most of the militia were workers of enterprises, representatives of the intelligentsia and students. Volunteers included 80 Leningrad writers and composer D.D. Shostakovich. In a short time, the first three divisions with a total strength of 31 thousand people and 15 separate artillery and machine-gun battalions - about 15 thousand people were formed in the Kirovsky, Moscow, Dzerzhinsky, Kuibyshev and Frunzensky districts.

The haste with which these formations were created could not but affect their quality. The militias had almost no heavy weapons, the number of machine guns in the units was much lower than the standard, since the territorial regions that formed the divisions themselves, by virtue of their capabilities, provided them with equipment, weapons and military equipment. The fighters got their hands on Canadian-made rifles stale in warehouses, sometimes training rifles with a drilled breech, sometimes nothing at all. In principle, this did not matter, since there was nowhere to get cartridges for them on the front line.

The personnel, demonstrating exceptionally high morale, did not have any military training, many did not serve in the army and never held weapons in their hands (60% of the 1st division of the people's militia consisted of storekeepers and people who did not have a military training; in the 2nd division there were 3894 "ordinary untrained" people, junior commanders - 205; in the 3rd division up to 50% of the personnel had no military training at all). Training had to begin with the correct winding of footcloths and the ability to eat rye crackers,

24

without turning the mouth into a bleeding wound, but even this art was mastered on the way to the front line. For example, the 1st DNO Major General F.P. The motherland was formed from July 4 to 10, and the very next day it took up defense on one of the sections of the Luga line; The 2nd DNO under Colonel N. Ugryumov completed its formation on July 12, a day later it arrived at the front and took up positions along the Luga River in the area of Porechie, Ivanovskoye, Sabsk. The overwhelming majority of the commanders of the divisions of the people's militia came from the reserve and were poorly trained to lead the conduct of hostilities, for example, in the 3rd division there were six regular commanders.

As the former fighter of the Izhora battalion S.V. Sorokin:

"..we, the fighters of a small factory detachment, went to war, where death is at every step, where you need to beat the enemy yourself. How to beat - we ourselves did not know. Beat and all. Even with a fist, even with a rifle, but only beat! And in fact, what could we then oppose to the enemy? Your military knowledge? We didn't have them. Combat experience? He wasn't there either. Weapon? At first it was very deplorable for us. What then? Breast! And we set her up."

On July 10-14, the 1st Kirov, 2nd Moscow and 3rd Frunzenskaya divisions of the people's militia were transferred to the Luga operational group and "dropped out to the battle lines." Somewhat later, the 4th DNO was completed under the command of Colonel P.I. Radygin, numbering 4267 people, which was also called "Light Rifle" or "Lightweight Libya in terms of armament and strength". What this means can be easily imagined, or can be read in the memoirs of P.A. Chugay, a former driver of the 84th tank battalion: "The militiamen of the 4th division approached the 3rd or 4th. Their appearance was deplorable: many without uniforms, only the eldest had a rifle, the rest had nothing.

In the second half of July, the formation of four guard divisions of the people's militia began. Honorary title, according to Zhdanov and Voroshilov,

25

was supposed to mean that these divisions were manned by "genuine guards of the working class" (isn't this idea what prompted Stalin to revive guards units in the Armed Forces?). It is alleged that the workers' guards were "slightly better armed", but the main weapon was still the chest. .

Over time, the issue of weapons was corrected, the divisions of the people's militia were renamed into rifle divisions, but the principles for the formation of new formations did not change. By the end of 1941, the Germans had defeated and destroyed 186 Soviet divisions, which is 109% of those available on June 22. No more than 8% of the personnel of the Red Army remained. New divisions were "molded" in batches - in 1941 alone 419 divisions and 305 brigades were formed - and immediately rushed to the fronts, where the commanders were just carrying out another very, very important operation, promising Comrade Stalin without fail to defeat some "scoundrel Guderian" or take Kiev on the anniversary of the proletarian revolution, while complaining about the lack of its forces and the exorbitant power of the enemy and demanding from the Supreme replenishment, replenishment, replenishment. Again, freshly minted soldiers already in the echelons learned how to wind footcloths, for the first time they learned about the existence of a military Charter, went into battle and died without having time to remember the name of their immediate superior. Since the losses with this method were enormous, combat experience was preserved and accumulated for a painfully long time. This practice continued until the Victory itself. In this sense, the entire Red Army during World War II can be called the People's Militia Army.

In addition to the divisions of the people's militia, other volunteer formations were created in Leningrad in July-August: fighter and partisan detachments, labor battalions.

Seven partisan regiments were also formed with a total number of 6,600 people, which, in addition to civilian volunteers, policemen, and NKVD officers, included about 1,000 border guards. Six

26

such suicide regiments were transferred behind enemy lines already in the first half of July. It was an ill-conceived adventure doomed to a natural ending. Firstly, bulky formations that did not have camouflaged bases and means of communication were deprived of maneuverability and secrecy, did not know how and did not have the opportunity to use guerrilla tactics, and were easily detected by the enemy. Secondly, the tasks they were assigned were completely non-partisan, namely, "the fight against parts of the enemy army." As a result, regiments armed only with small arms, poorly trained militarily, operated mainly in the front line, where the saturation of German troops was maximum, entered into open battle with enemy regular units using tanks, artillery and aircraft, and pretty quickly were destroyed, without bringing much benefit. It is characteristic that then they were called not partisan, but fighter regiments. Later, from their remnants, who returned to Leningrad, separate sabotage and reconnaissance groups were created.

In order to prepare the necessary reserve of the city's defenders, on July 13, a decree was adopted on the military training of all men aged 17 to 55 years. Compulsory military training of the population was introduced. About 160 thousand people went to the front as part of all volunteer formations from Leningrad.

In accordance with the decision of the Council of People's Commissars of July 8, the city, as well as throughout the country, introduced a rationing system for the distribution of products. Workers received 800 grams of bread a day, employees - 600 grams, dependents and children - 400 grams each. According to the cards, the established norms of cereals, meat, fats and confectionery were also issued. Many types of goods were still freely sold in stores at fixed state prices, and some basic products could be purchased at commercial prices.

For most of the townsfolk, the war still seemed something far away and not terrible: "We expected quick victories in

our army, invincible and the best in the world, as they constantly wrote about it in the newspapers. During the first days of the war, a peculiar festive atmosphere developed in the city. The weather was clear, sunny, the gardens and squares were green, there were many flowers. The city was adorned with incompetent posters on military themes. The streets came to life. A number of recruits in brand new uniforms busily scurried along the sidewalks. Singing was heard everywhere, the sounds of gramophones and harmonicas: the mobilized were in a hurry to get drunk for the last time and celebrate their departure to the front.

Despite the fact that the course of the war no longer fit into the plot of the military-patriotic utopias of the writers P. Pavlenko and N. Shpanov, the Soviet people believed that the "big day" was about to come and "our steel regiments will bring freedom and happiness to all working people." humanity."

July 10, 1941 is the official start date of the battle for Leningrad.

On this day, German and Finnish troops simultaneously launched strikes in the Luga, Novgorod and Staraya Russian directions, in Estonia and Eastern Karelia.

On the Onega-Ladoga Isthmus, the Karelia army went on the offensive.

The Fuhrer of the German nation in the matter of the speedy capture of Leningrad had high hopes for the "brave people" of Finland, "full of the desire for revenge." Although no formal agreement was signed with the Reich, and the Finns did not promise anything specifically to the Germans. However, after the fall of Norway and France, the country of Suomi, with a population of four million, found itself between the German hammer and the Soviet anvil, with all its desire, had no chance of maintaining neutrality.

The bitter experience of the "winter war" of 1939/40, the constant political pressure and threats from the Kremlin, unrelenting interference in internal affairs only strengthened the conviction of the Finnish people in the hostility of the USSR, the Finns began to seek political support wherever
her

could be found. An indelible impression was also made by the occupation and annexation of the independent Baltic republics "to the happy family of Soviet peoples", carried out by the Red Army in the summer of 1940. The Finnish government saw with its own eyes the future prepared for the country. In addition, rumors reached the Finns about the demands regarding Finland made by Molotov during the November visit to Berlin.

And Vyacheslav Mikhailovich, discussing with Hitler the delimitation of spheres of interest "on a global scale" and plans for access to the Indian Ocean, stubbornly insisted that at first the Kremlin would like to get everything that is due under the secret protocol of 1939, which was not executed according to all points: "The Finnish question still remains unresolved ... The Soviet government considers it its duty to finally settle the Finnish question."

Moreover, the Kremlin dreamers interpreted the "settlement" unambiguously – occupation, sovietization and the "voluntary" accession of Finland to the USSR. No matter how the Fuhrer tried to persuade the Soviet premier to enter into the position of leading the war and economically interested in the Finnish and Swedish supplies to Germany, no matter how he asked to wait at least a year or six months before the conclusion of peace, Molotov was adamant, expressing a decisive incomprehension: why on earth the Soviet Should the Union "delay its plans by six months or by a year"? In fact, it has been two months since document No. 103203, "Considerations on the Deployment of the Armed Forces of the Red Army in the Case of a War with Finland," was signed.

On November 25, 1940, Molotov conveyed to Berlin the conditions under which the Soviet Union was ready to join the Tripartite Pact to participate in a joint German-Italian-Japanese-Soviet

project to redraw the map of the world. The first point in this document is the recognition of Moscow's right to privatize Finland.

On the same day, People's Commissar of Defense Timoshenko sent a directive to the command of the Leningrad District on the preparation of a war with the "Finnish booger". Set Directive

29

The task was to "defeat the Armed Forces of Finland, seize its territory" and reach the Gulf of Bothnia. Helsinki was supposed to be "liberated" on the 25th day of the operation.

The Finns feared that the unconditional neutrality they had previously adhered to would only lead to a war simultaneously against Germany and the USSR. It was preferable to choose one of the sides in time. The prospects for friendship with Stalin loomed quite clearly, and the absolute majority of the "White Finns" categorically did not want to repaint themselves as "Reds". Supreme Commander Marshal K.G. Mannerheim said in an interview that, from the point of view of the Finns, going over to the side of the Soviet Union would mean "the same thing as defeat": "There was nothing surprising in the fact that the mood among the people was distinguished by deep distrust of the Soviet Union. Could we trust such a neighbor who started a war in order to subjugate our country and who, after defining the basic conditions for a peace agreement, began to make new demands?

The Western powers could do nothing to help. At the same time, Germany itself extended its hand, offering to conclude a transit agreement and organize the supply of military equipment. Since the autumn of 1940, the Finns have taken a course towards rapprochement with the Reich. "Everyone understood," recalls Mannerheim, "that Germany's interest in Finland was for us the straw that a drowning man grabs at, although no one knew how she could withstand us. The German initiative gave Finland a long-awaited respite after more than half a year of continuous pressure on it. For some time the demands of the Russians stopped."

Even closer cooperation between the two countries was facilitated by the actions of the Soviet leadership, which suddenly and unilaterally broke the trade agreement and deprived the Finns of the supply of grain, fuel and raw materials. Soon over 90% of Finnish imports came from Germany.

thirty

At the end of May 1941, Finnish-German military consultations were held in Salzburg, during which the Germans hinted at the possibility of an armed conflict between Germany and the USSR. As General Dietmar points out, according to the developers of the Barbarossa plan, "the decisive prerequisite for conducting operations against Leningrad from the north, as well as the operation to seize the Murmansk railway, was the entry of Finland into the war on the side of Germany. The Soviet Union itself contributed to this. The war started under a trifling pretext in the winter of 1939/40, the harsh conditions of the Muscovite peace with which it ended, and the almost open threats to the very existence of Finland from the Soviet Union caused the Finnish people to feel such despair and anxiety that joining to the strong, then at the zenith of its power, Germany seemed to the Finns

the only way out of this situation."

However, the Germans did not put pressure on the Finns, did not share specific plans, conversations were held in the subjunctive mood, and Finland was in no hurry with assurances of allied loyalty, avoiding any obligations. In June, an agreement was reached on the movement of German troops from Norway to the Finnish Arctic, as well as on the joint conduct of hostilities in the event of an attack by the Soviet Union on Finland. At the same time, the President of the country, Risto Ryti, emphasized that Finland intends to remain neutral until she herself becomes a victim of aggression. Hitler was not particularly worried about this, having no doubt that the "aggression" would take place. Marshal Mannerheim also knew about this: "The field for maneuver in foreign policy, if one could speak of any field at all, was very limited," continues Mannerheim.

— In fact, one could say that everything, including Finland's independence, depended on relations with Germany... The choice between Germany and the Soviet Union led us to a dead end... Finland had no opportunity freely control your own destiny. In practice

31

There was no way, in terms of plan, to stay away from the approaching conflict.”

On June 15, the Finnish government received a telegram from Field Marshal Keitel saying that war with the USSR was inevitable. Two days later, a general mobilization was announced. The neutrality of Finland by this time was in question, which was facilitated by the transfer of German troops to Lapland, the permission for German minelayers to take cover near the Finnish coast, and for Luftwaffe bombers to land on June 22 at the airfield in Kuovola.

On the first day of the German attack on the Soviet Union, Russian planes attacked Finnish warships and coastal fortifications. The artillery batteries of the Soviet base on the Hanko peninsula began shelling Finnish territory, and our valiant border guards violated the border in several places. The Finns, in a hopeless attempt to maintain neutrality, endured these outrages for three days. The army was ordered to "avoid any action that could give the Russians a pretext for provocation." Diplomats in all capitals protested and explained their government's position. As a result, on June 24, both London and Berlin recognized Finland as a neutral country. Moscow was not satisfied with the peaceful resolution of the situation.

Despite Finland's military preparations, the massive Soviet bombardment that began on June 25, 1941 became the reason for the start of the war. Of course, without declaring war. It was the governments of the landlords and capitalists who were obliged to adhere to the norms of international law, and the world's first "republic of working people" did not fight with anyone, but only provided assistance to the "oppressed classes".

The history of the Leningrad Military District proudly reports: “June 24 (the Finnish ambassador at that time was trying to find out from Vyacheslav Molotov whether Finland could consider itself a neutral state) Headquarters of the High Command of the Armed Forces of the USSR informi

32

warned the Military Councils of the Northern Front, the Northern and Baltic Fleets that German troops and aircraft were concentrating on the territory of Finland to strike at Leningrad and capture Murmansk and Kandalaksha. To forestall their attack, at dawn on June 25, Soviet aviation, at the direction of the Headquarters, attacked eighteen enemy airfields, making 487 sorties. 30 enemy planes were destroyed on the ground and 14 were shot down in air battles. Attacks on enemy airfields continued in the following DAYS.

At the same time, they successfully bombed Finnish cities and villages, including Helsinki and Turku.

Hundreds of tons of bombs fell on bridges, roads, factories, railway stations and residential areas across the country. Moreover, judging by the memoirs of Air Chief Marshal A.A. Novikov, who spoke about the "first in the history of Soviet aviation" multi-day air operation, everything was even bigger:

“Last preparations, clarification of data, short negotiations with the commanders of air formations, and engines roared at the airfields. An air armada of 263 bombers and 224 fighters and attack aircraft rushed at the enemy... The raid lasted several hours, one group replaced another. For the first time in the history of our Air Force, such a quantity of military equipment was involved in simultaneous actions, and on the entire front: from Vyborg to Murmansk.”

The Finns credited themselves with 26 downed bombers flying out on combat missions, as a rule, without fighter cover. It is noteworthy that literally three days before that, Stalin had

“feared” of all kinds of provocations. And now the “wonderful Georgian” is bombing his neighbor, not really knowing anything about the plans to “capture Murmansk and Kandalaksha”. But on the other hand, he still firmly believed that the Red Army would transfer military operations to foreign territory with mighty blows.

33

On the Soviet-Finnish border, the 1st and 10th mechanized corps (about 1,500 tanks) have already turned around and, “sparkling with the brilliance of steel”, have frozen in anticipation of an order, which began to advance to their starting lines on June 17, 1941!

On the same evening, at a meeting of the Finnish Parliament, it was announced that the war begins with the same thing as the “winter war”, with the attack of the USSR. On June 26, President Ryti announced on the radio a state of war between Finland and the Soviet Union, and Finnish troops were allowed to open fire on border violators.

However, according to the Soviet interpretation of events, Finland was the aggressor:

“The Soviet government and the High Command, not wanting to give the Finnish army a reason to open hostilities, ordered their troops not to open fire until the Finnish ground units went on the offensive ... On June 23 and 24, Finnish aviation tried to bombard Leningrad, Kronstadt and cities of the Karelian-Finnish SSR.

However, the fact remains that the Finns did not “suddenly” attack us, and Leningrad was not bombed even once during the entire war. A special order to the air force categorically forbade even flights over the city.

The main goal of Talvisota (continuation war) was declared to be the return of the territories lost as a result of the Moscow peace, then everything depended on the course of the war and the desire of the Germans to share what they had acquired with their “brothers in arms”. The campaign plan provided for three stages: an offensive north of Ladoga and access to the Svir River and Lake Onega, the “liberation” of the Karelian Isthmus and entry into Karelia. Since the Finnish General Staff did not have any offensive plans before, it took them three weeks to develop operations and regroup troops. “All the human resources of the country were mobilized into the army, including conscripts of the oldest ages.”

34

To solve the first task, a 100,000-strong group was concentrated under the command of the Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant General Heinrichs, which included the 6th and 7th Army Corps, as well as the “O” group led by Major General Oinonen - a total of 5 infantry divisions, 1 cavalry and 2 infantry brigades.

They were opposed by the 54th, 71st and 168th rifle divisions, the 26th (Sortavala) fortified area and the 55th mixed air division, which were part of the 7th army of Lieutenant General F.D. Gorelenko. The Soviet troops that advanced to the line of the state border did not expect special surprises from the Finns, they did not prepare defensive lines, they had no information about the enemy, they did not notice the concentration of the strike force along the only railway line in the area. And who to fear, the Finns, or what?

Comrade Stalin, as always, correctly pointed out that the white-eyed chukhna did not really know how to fight. “Fools,” said the greatest strategist of all times and peoples, summing up the results of the “winter war,” “they sit in the pillboxes and don’t go out, they think that they can’t cope with the pillboxes, they sit and drink tea ... And the offensive of the Finns is not a broken penny costs. For the past three months, do you remember at least one case of a serious mass offensive by the Finnish army?

On July 10, the army of General Heinrichs went on the offensive, with the immediate goal of reaching the northeastern shore of Lake Ladoga, and in the future to develop success in Petrozavodsk and Olonets. The main blow at the junction of the 71st and 168th divisions was delivered by the reinforced infantry brigade of the 6th

corps of Major General Hagglund. The troops of General Gorelenko, stretched out on a wide front (for example, the 71st division "held" 125 km of the border with a cordon), failed to repel the blow and began to retreat in eastern and southeastern directions. Through the gap that had formed, the enemy advanced to the Loymola station and on July 14 cut the only railway communication in the 7th Army zone. On July 16, the Finns captured Pitkäranta and reached

35

the banks of Ladoga, and the 1st Infantry Brigade of Colonel Lagus, following in the forefront, went to the Tuloks River. Gorelenko's army was divided into two parts. The Sortavala group — the 168th rifle division, the 74th separate reconnaissance battalion, one regiment of the 71st rifle division and its reinforcement unit — was cut off from the main forces and on July 21 was subordinated to the 23rd army. The Finns continued to develop the offensive in three directions: Petrozavodsk, Olonets and Sortaval.

In this situation, the Military Council of the Northern Front reinforced the 7th Army with one regiment of the 198th mechanized division, a regiment of the 36th anti-tank brigade, two mountain rifle battalions, two tank companies and an armored train. To eliminate the enemy breakthrough, two operational groups were formed from units and subunits sent to the Onega-Ladoga Isthmus: Petrozavodsk under the command of Lieutenant General M.A. Antonyuk and the southern lieutenant general V.D. Tsvetaeva. These groups, with strikes from the east and southeast, were supposed to destroy the part of the enemy that had penetrated into the Vedlozero and Salmi area and subsequently capture the Loymola station.

On July 23, the troops of the 7th Army, after artillery preparation, launched a counteroffensive. During two days of fighting, units of the Petrozavodsk Operational Group managed to advance several kilometers to the west. The troops of the southern group could not move forward, and on July 24 they were driven back to the eastern bank of the Tuloksa River.

In order to assist the Tsvetaev group, two battalions from the 4th Marine Brigade of Major General B.N. Nenasheva. The troops landed in a hurry, without preparation, without fire support and without prompt cooperation with General Tsvetaev, for whose help all this was started. The truth, which is rare in itself, was produced before

36

preliminary air and ground reconnaissance, but she did not find the enemy on the islands. Although he was there, he managed to equip a coastal battery on Lunkulunsariya, which was connected to the mainland by a dam, and one of the reconnaissance groups disappeared without a trace. On July 24, the Marines landed on the island of Mantinsari, on the 27th - on Lunkulunsari. However, the Finns had the opportunity to freely build up their forces, and the paratroopers did not receive any support. The historians of our fleet omit further details, but, of course, "the landing forces pulled back part of the enemy forces," and the 4th brigade had two fewer battalions.

By the end of July, the front line stabilized at the turn of the Tuloksa River.

The Northwestern Front in mid-July had 23 rifle, 5 tank, 4 mechanized divisions, 1 rifle and 3 airborne brigades. True, in 22 divisions, losses in personnel and equipment amounted to more than 50%. In total there were about 300

thousands of people.

Von Leeb had 23 divisions at his disposal for operations in Estonia and attacking Leningrad, including 3 tank and 3 motorized. Army Group Sever was to use the right flank of the 4th Panzer Group to cut off Leningrad from the east and southeast. Consolidation of the success of the strike force was assigned to the 16th Army. Von Küchler received the task of cutting off and

destroy Soviet troops in Estonia, capture the Moonsund Islands and the main naval base of the Baltic Fleet - Tallinn.

Without an operational pause from the line of Pskov, the Velikaya River, German motorized corps rushed to Luga and Novgorod.

Formations of the 56th motorized corps advanced in the direction of Porkhov, Shims, Novgorod, aiming to cut the Moscow-Leningrad railway line in the Chudovo region. For a deep detour, Manstein had only two divisions - the 8th Panzer and the 3rd Motorized.

37

nuyu. They had to overcome a heavily swampy and wooded area, unfavorable for the actions of armored vehicles. But already on July 10, the 3rd motorized division took Porkhov in a fierce battle, and the 8th tank division was moving towards Soltsy. The 22nd Rifle Corps (180th and 182nd Rifle Divisions) defending in this direction failed to detain the enemy. The corps was Estonian, and a significant part of the commanders and Red Army soldiers from its composition went over to the side of the enemy. |

The 41st Corps of Reinhardt, having broken through the defenses of the Soviet troops northeast of Pskov, rolled out to Struga Krasnye with three divisions.

All this time, the forces of the Leningraders, the local population and advancing troops on the northern bank of the Luga River were building a defensive line stretching from the Gulf of Finland to Lake Ilmen, consisting of two lanes about 175 km long and 10-15 km deep. Mines were laid in front of the front line and in the depths, anti-tank ditches, scarps were dug, forest blockages were arranged. Simultaneously with the defensive work, the troops of the Luga operational group were intensively preparing for the upcoming battles, and some units had already been fighting in the foreground since July 12. In order to buy time to prepare the defense on the Luga line, the Military Council of the Northern Front created several barrage detachments and sent them to the Luga-Pskov highway. These detachments included infantry, artillery and engineering units. Here, the formations of the 11th Army retreated with battles.

Supported by active air operations and a strong artillery grouping, the Soviet units offered stubborn resistance to the 41st motorized corps, which, due to the rugged and swampy terrain, was forced to operate exclusively along the only road to Luga. On July 12, the frontal German offensive, having lost surprise and maneuver, got stuck in the Plyussa area. This forced General Göpner to abandon a direct breakthrough on Luga and turn heads

38

nye forces of Reinhardt to the north-west, leaving only the 269th Infantry Division of General von Leiser near Luga.

German tankers, having made a 170-kilometer forced march along forest roads, which we considered impassable for vehicles (however, one of the participants in the raid also described the route passed as a quagmire of the "most vile nature"), on the night of July 13-14 secretly went to the river in the areas of Ivanovsky and Sabsk, 20-25 km southeast of Kingisepp. Although the Sabska Bridge was destroyed before the 1st Panzer Division approached, it managed to seize a bridgehead here. Thanks to the actions of the sabotage units of the Brandenburg regiment, the 6th Panzer Division of General Franz Landgraf occupied the crossings near Ivanovsky intact and also moved to the opposite bank. However, it was not possible to develop an offensive from the bridgeheads. A monumental Soviet study claims that saboteurs from the Brandenburg regiment worked here. In fact, the two bridges at Ivanovsky went to the enemy safe and sound thanks to the suddenness of his actions and the carelessness of the guards.

"The offensive of the German mobile units was stopped by the stubborn and active defense of the troops advancing from Leningrad," reports the Russian historian. Although, to be precise, it was quite the opposite. Having crossed Luga, Reinhardt found himself in the same situation as Manstein near Dvinsk: there was practically no serious enemy ahead, Leningrad lay in two crossings, the "panzers" were waiting for the order to attack, but to conduct a further offensive only with mobile formations without infantry support von Leeb considered it too risky. The main forces of Army Group North and almost all aviation, in accordance with the plan of deep flank coverage of the enemy from the southeast, were aimed at Lake Ilmen and Novgorod. General Reinhardt received a stop order.

This allowed the Soviet command to bring additional forces to the bridgeheads, which were unloaded

39

from trains right in front of the Germans. It was the Leningrad divisions of the people's militia who arrived at the war. They were immediately thrown into battle by K.E., who personally rushed from Novgorod. Voroshilov. Soviet planes dominated the skies, and the air forces of the Baltic Fleet and the 7th Air Defense Fighter Corps were brought in to attack the crossings.

"The 1st rifle division of the people's militia," recalled General Erhard Raus, who was in charge of the defense of the bridgehead (the general confuses the numbers of Soviet divisions), "accompanied by tanks, appeared in front of us in the morning, rapidly advancing on Ivanovskoye along the road leading to the village from the west. She intended to capture both bridges across Luga on the same day. Sudden fire from well-hidden German batteries forced the Russian infantry to retreat. Although the enemy tanks first halted in confusion, they soon moved forward again in short bursts. The inexperienced Russian infantry followed them, urged on by officers and commissars, who threatened the soldiers with pistols. Tanks, gradually picking up speed,

. rolled in a wedge formation and were already threatening to break through the German line, when suddenly our 88-mm and 105-mm guns began to speak, opening fire from ambushes from a distance of no more than 500 meters. After each shot, a cloud of smoke rose, marking hits. Meanwhile, our artillery and machine guns were mowing down the ranks of the Russian infantry following the tanks. The Russian attack ran out of steam... In the meantime, the 3rd Volunteer Division of the people's militia, advancing from the village of Yurki, gathered at its starting positions on the edge of a dense forest approaching Ivanovsky from the east. This attack, carried out without artillery support, began in the late afternoon. The Russians advanced in several waves on both sides of the road and ran towards the dam across completely open terrain. Our artillery, which used to bombard the areas of concentration, now brought down a barrage of fire on this yellow-brown mass. Machine guns and tank cannons opened furious fire, bombarding the enemy with deadly projectiles. Attack

behind

40

took a sip in just a few minutes, and the result of this senseless act was only a terrible massacre. But even after this, the attacks were repeated three more times until the evening and each time ended in failure. During the attacks, the Russians suffered horrendous losses, but did not take not an inch of land.

Things got to the point that, under the marshal's scolding, the commander of the Northern Front himself climbed into the tank and rushed to reconnoiter the enemy, but the "thirty-four" was quickly knocked out, and General Popov, who miraculously escaped, immediately received a fust for reckless prowess". Although the Marshal of the USSR himself had nothing to do there, he could not lead the war on the map, the man was not of that temper.

"Voroshilov's style of activity was, of course, influenced by the attachments and ideas of the period of the civil war, during which he was formed as a mature and major Soviet military leader," says the former commander of the 23rd Army, General A.I. Cherepanov. "Even then, we know this, he did not sit in the headquarters and did not bow to bullets. But then the nature of the battle was

different. And even now, in the new conditions, he was drawn to the troops, to the battlefield, although, of course, it was not possible to see, to grasp here the whole large-scale picture of what was happening, but only not most of it. Kliment Efremovich took the words from the song "the first marshal will lead us into battle" literally. From here the whole Voroshilov EPOS was born in the Red Army:

"They say that in 1941, Voroshilov, in order to prevent the withdrawal of some of our units in the direction of the main German attack, rushed with a group of officers to cut across the retreating ones and thus restored the situation, preventing a breakthrough of the front."

In a report for this period, the commander of the 41st motorized corps wrote:

"For the units at the bridgeheads, the time has come for a stubborn struggle associated with heavy losses. The enemy began to continuously attack them. Then for four weeks the soldiers of the main divisions, accustomed to

41

militant attacks and breakthroughs, waged here, deeply burrowing into the ground, a positional war.

Therefore, it would be more correct to say that Reinhardt's two divisions by "stubborn and active defense" managed not only to hold, but also, having repulsed all attacks, to expand the captured bridgeheads.

And not even the divisions, whose main forces still continued to force the swamps and pave many kilometers of roads, but their forward detachments. So, for the first six days on the bridgehead near Ivanovsky, the battle group of Colonel Raus, which numbered 1,500 soldiers, 36 howitzers and field guns, 9 anti-tank guns, 12 anti-aircraft guns of the caliber 88 mm, 26 anti-aircraft guns, 230 machine guns and 60 light tanks, mostly Czech 356).

Voroshilov and Zhdanov quickly appointed the perpetrators: the commander of the Luga task force, the "talented military commander" K.P. Pyadyshev was first removed from his post for inept leadership of the troops, indiscipline and

lack of initiative, and then arrested and put on trial for "counter-revolutionary statements" and "disbelief in our strength" (in Khrushchev's time, the death of the general was incriminated to the "Beria clique"). Colonel N.S. Ugryumov was removed from command of the 2nd DNO.

The 36th motorized division of Lieutenant General Ottenbacher, clearing the eastern coast of Lake Peipsi from Soviet troops, reached the Glovskoye combat area, which did not resist for long.

General Manstein, who, as a result of Hoepner's planned maneuver, found himself in an even more isolated position, still continued to advance. His troops broke through to the Luga line west of Shimsk.

The situation here has deteriorated sharply. In an order to the troops of the North-Western Front dated July 14, the commander-in-chief of the direction emphasized that a direct threat of invasion loomed over Leningrad and demanded that the unit commanders "establish military order at the front and in the rear, put an end without

42

will, indecision and slowness in action, do not stop at extreme measures, destroy cowards and alarmists on the spot ":

"...While the troops of the Northern Front are courageously fighting the brutal fascist Shutskor hordes on the line from the Barents Sea to Khanko and Tallinn, heroically

protect every inch of our native Soviet land, the troops of the North-Western Front, not always giving a proper rebuff to the enemy, often leave their positions without even entering into a decisive battle, which further encourage the insolent enemy. Separate alarmists and cowards not only arbitrarily leave the battle front, but also sow panic among honest and staunch fighters. Commanders and political workers in a number of cases not only do not stop the panic, do not organize and do not lead their units into battle, but by their shameful behavior sometimes further increase the disorganization and panic of the front line.

The insolent enemy continues to move forward. I have given instructions to conduct the strictest investigation of all criminal cases of unauthorized abandonment of the front by individual units, commanders and fighters, and all those responsible, regardless of ranks and old merits, to bring to trial by the left tribunals with the most severe punishment, up to death.

Since the "embarrassed" German 16th Army was advancing south of Lake Ilmen in the direction of Kholm and Staraya Russa, a gap of 200 kilometers formed between its formations and the 56th Motorized Corps.

The Soviet command decided to use this gap to disrupt the enemy attack on Novgorod and defeat the enemy formations that had broken through to Shimsk. In the period from July 14 to 18, on the orders of Marshal Voroshilov, several formations of the 11th Army prepared and carried out a counterattack from the north and south on the flanks of Manstein's troops in the Soltsy area. From the air, the operation was supported by 235 aircraft of four aviation divisions and a long-range bomber air corps. German

43

The 8th Panzer and 3rd Motorized Divisions were practically surrounded and cut off from their communications. On the Soviet side, 3 rifle divisions and the 21st Panzer Division of Colonel L.V., deployed from the Karelian Isthmus, tried to destroy them. Bunin. In addition, the operation of the 11th Army was provided from the south by the 202nd mechanized division, from the west by the 182nd rifle division. Manstein recalled: "It cannot be said that the position of the corps at that moment was very enviable ... The next few days were critical, and the enemy tried with all his might to maintain the encirclement." Fierce fighting lasted five days, on other days the Germans repulsed up to seventeen attacks a day. Manstein's troops, receiving supplies by air, managed to hold out until July 18, when the SS division "Totenkopf" arrived in time to help them. The encirclement ring was broken, the front was restored at the bottom line. Nevertheless, the Germans were thrown back 40 km, the danger of their breakthrough to Novgorod was temporarily eliminated. "Puffy enemy," exults Marshal Vasilevsky; seemingly a major military leader, but he describes the situation at the level of the main political officer, he was forced to retreat somewhat, and the remnants of his motorized formations fled in a panic. On July 19, the German command ordered the troops of the Army Group "North" to suspend the attack on Leningrad and resume it only after pulling up the formations of the 18th Army to the Luga line and putting in order the units of the 4th Panzer Group, which by this time had lost up to 50% material part. At the end of July, Manstein complained to the Chief Quartermaster of the OKH, General Paulus, that as a result of the misuse of tank troops on unsuitable terrain, the loss of people in three of his divisions "for the past time" had reached "already 600 people." It is not clear what period of time the tank general had in mind, but it is known that the troops of the North-Western Front lost up to 2 thousand people killed, wounded and captured daily.

Forcing the enemy to stop the offensive on the rube

same Luga River, Soviet troops won almost three

44

Delhi for the organization of defense on the near approaches to Leningrad, as well as for pulling up fresh forces to this direction.

In Estonia, the 8th Army under the command of General F.S. Ivanova, transferred by order of Voroshilov on July 14 to the Northern Front, successfully repelled the attacks of two enemy infantry divisions from the 26th Army Corps at the turn of Pärnu, Tartu with two battered rifle corps. To assist the Soviet troops and provide lake communications, by order of July 3, the Chudskaya military flotilla was formed with the main base in Glova. The basis of its combat power was five training wheeled and propeller steamers of pre-revolution Nion construction, which belonged to the Dzerzhinsky Naval School. There were also several boats and tugboats. On July 10-12, two 76-mm Lender cannons and nine "forty-five" guns taken from the Aurora cruiser were installed on the vessels. As a result of such modernization, the Narova, Issa, Embakh, Plussa gunboats and the Uku messenger ship were received.

General F.S. Ivanov, having no information about the grouping and intentions of the enemy, speculatively came to the conclusion that the Germans would rush to Tallinn with all their might. Therefore, he concentrated two-thirds of the army on his right flank. The enemy decided otherwise. On July 22, having brought up three more infantry divisions, he resumed the offensive in Estonia, striking at the joint of the 10th and 11th corps in the direction of Pyltsam, Mustve. From an operational point of view, this direction was considered "important", the road to Narva and further to Leningrad opened beyond the Estonian towns. But our troops were not there. Rapidly advancing to the east, encountering virtually no resistance, the Germans reached the western coast of Lake Peipus in the Mustve region on July 25, cutting off the 11th Rifle Corps from the main forces. The command of the Northern Front sent an enlightening cipher telegram to the Military Council of the 8th Army:

45

"In front of the front of your army there are divisions of the reserve 26th corps, which have extremely extended and empty rear areas. The enemy acts boldly, impudently, coming out in small parts to your communications, creating only the appearance of an environment.

This adversary, with skilful active leadership, can and must be destroyed. However, instead of active actions, command of all degrees. reacts extremely painfully to the appearance of small enemy groupings in its rear and withdraws troops, instead of organizing them to actively defeat the enemy coming to the ground ...

I order:

1) Cease the unreasonable withdrawal of troops, prevent defense by cordons and proceed to active operations by strike groups along the flanks and rear of the breaking enemy.

2) In sector 10 sk, create a strike group with a role of counteracting enemy breakthroughs and his resolute attack.

pressure."

On the same day, four German fighters from cannons and machine guns fired at the ships of the Chudskaya flotilla. Several sailors were killed, and even the deck was pierced on the Narova. This raid made such an indelible impression on the commander of the flotilla, Captain | rank N.Yu. Avraamov that he requested permission to sink the ships. A categorical refusal followed from Leningrad, but the activity of the flotilla was still paralyzed. One after another, the panicked crews threw the "gunboats" aground and scattered through the forests. By July 30, the remnants of the 11th Rifle Corps had made their way out of the encirclement to the north along the shore of the lake and tried to gain a foothold at the turn of the Mustve River.

General F.S. Ivanov was replaced as commander-8 by Major General I.M. Lyubovtsev, who "ruled" for exactly a week. Despite the arriving marching reinforcements and

46

equipment, a fresh 268th rifle division and the 4th division of the people's militia, the army continued to retreat. By the end of August 7, the Germans reached the coast of the Gulf of Finland. The 8th Army was divided into two isolated parts, the 10th Rifle Corps, Major General I.F. Nikolaev (10th, 16th and 22nd rifle divisions) rolled back to Tallinn. The newly appointed commander of the army, Lieutenant General P.P. Pshennikov, was given the task of forming a strike force, "destroying and defeating the enemy standing in front" and restoring the situation. But instead, he withdrew the remnants of the army, which received the name of the "eastern group" in combat orders, to the eastern bank of the Kunda River.

Chapter 2

TALLINN BREAKTHROUGH KBF (August 1941)

With the advent of the enemy on the southern coast of the Gulf of Finland, Soviet sea communications came under attack from enemy aircraft, and the ships of the Baltic Fleet were trapped in the Tallinn. On August 14, Marshal Voroshilov appointed the commander of the Baltic Fleet, Vice Admiral V.F., responsible for the defense of the main base of the fleet. Tributs, subordinating the troops of the 10th rifle corps. such an Neither in theoretical nor in practical terms, the fleet to conduct operation was not prepared. Even in a nightmare, no one could see that the enemy naval base, located hundreds of kilometers from the state border, would be threatened from the land direction. In the event of a war with Germany, the People's Commissar of the Navy assigned the following tasks to the Baltic Fleet: to be ready to repel amphibious assaults on the islands of Ezel and Dago, to destroy the enemy fleet together with the air force when it attempts to penetrate into the Gulf of Finland and Riga, and to assist the flanks of the ground forces, which, of course, were supposed to smash the enemy on his own territory. The navigators of the 1st mine-torpedo, 37th and 73rd bomber regiments of the KBF plotted courses on Tilsit, Memel on flight maps. Danzig Koenigsberg.

The main power of the Kriegsmarine was directed against

48

England. The destruction of the Baltic Fleet was planned to be achieved by capturing its bases from land and delivering air strikes. Up to this point, it was necessary to block the Soviet ships and ensure their communications in the maritime theater. For operations in the Baltic, the Germans allocated 28 torpedo boats, 7 patrol boats, 10 minelayers, 5 trawlers and 5 submarines. The operational plans of the German command were to ensure that "with weak forces, but very skillfully, put the Russian fleet in unfavorable conditions by using active minefields." For these purposes, it formed three mine-protecting groups, giving them 2 flotillas of torpedo boats and 2 flotillas of minesweepers. In the period from June 20 to 23, 1941, these groups secretly set up 1062 mines and 368 mine defenders in the operational zone (!) of the Baltic Fleet. How the enemy managed to do all this under the conditions of the absolute superiority of our fleet, under its very nose, and in the conditions of white nights, this is a great mystery. Neither the Soviet naval patrols, nor the seaplanes flying out for reconnaissance several times a day found anything suspicious. According to Rear Admiral N.M. Sobolev, who served in the operational department of the Main Naval Staff, Soviet intelligence identified German minelayers in Finnish ports and the command "it was clear" that they had arrived there "not for a walk, but with a specific military purpose." However, "...we did not attach due importance to this fact. It was finally appreciated only after the minelayers completed their combat mission.

In the future, the Germans continued the "mine war" until July 10, without encountering absolutely any opposition, only in the Gulf of Finland they laid 1738 mines and 1659 mine defenders. Soviet ships, on the basis of the instructions of the Main Naval Staff "to lay mines around the clock, use everything that is possible", were doing the same, building a mine-artillery position at the mouth of the bay according to the plans of the times of the admirals

Essen and Kolchak. It was only very recently that it was recognized that "the creation of a mine and artillery position at the entrance to the Gulf of Finland did not make sense. Once again, we are trapped in a pattern." At the same time, neither before the war, nor with its beginning, no one organized reconnaissance trawling, because according to the same "template", these enemy ships with landing troops on board were supposed to rush to our shores and die on our mines. In fact, it turned out the opposite. Already on the night of June 23, a detachment of ships that left Tallinn to lay mines ended up on a German minefield.

"The ships laid mines in the Gulf of Finland near the main base of the fleet - Tallinn," Admiral N.M. analyzes the operation. Sobolev. They operated at night. There was no enemy in the area, no one interfered with the laying of mines. And under these conditions, the command of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet sent the cruiser "Maxim Gorky" and destroyers to cover the minelayers. Was such a cover required? Hardly. Nevertheless, the covering ships went to sea, because this was provided for by the plan and the classical scheme. But no one guessed to give the order to sweep the maneuvering area of the detachment of ships. There was no such item in the plans. As a result, the cruiser "Maxim Gorky", whose bow was torn off, and the destroyer "Gordy" received heavy damage, the destroyer "Angry" and the minesweeper T-208 "Pulley" were killed.

And trawlers were sorely lacking. In the light of the offensive doctrine itself, they were hardly ever built. Of the approximately 200 ships of this class required by the fleet, only 33 units were available. The former fishing vessels mobilized for military service were re-equipped and entered service extremely slowly. But they were most often used for other purposes: they carried out sentinel service, transported bombs and aviation fuel to the island of Ezel, supporting the activities of long-range aviation that attacked Berlin, and died. During the two months of the war, the Baltic Fleet lost a third of its "plowmen of the sea."

Anti-mine armament remained at the level of the First World War and was represented by Schultz undercutting trawls of the 1898 model, kite trawls of the 1911 model of the year and K-1 type guard paravanes. What are non-contact magnetic and antenna mines of the enemy like EMS, TVM or TMA and how to deal with them, the RKKF did not know and did not want to know, they did not produce their samples (for the sake of truth, we note that the Baltics had MIRAB induction mines of domestic production - stva adopted in 1939, as many as 20 pieces, so when the rooster pecked, I had to buy from the British). The convoys were escorted directly behind the trawls without the preliminary mine reconnaissance required by the Manual. Not so much even because of the lack of anti-mine ships, but with the paranoid goal of "masking the fairways" from the gaze of the adversary. This innovation was confirmed by the order of the commander of the fleet on August 10, although Tributs himself in his memoirs points to his idiocy: "Navigational features (banks, shoals, islands) make it possible to navigate in the Gulf of Finland strictly in certain directions, knowledge of geography was well known to the enemy. Therefore, for clogging our communications with mines, he had ideal conditions.

Another "surprise" was the effectiveness and impunity of the actions of German aviation and the helplessness of the "Stalin's falcons". And our ships were distinguished by powerful artillery and torpedo, but extremely weak anti-aircraft weapons.

Soviet naval commanders did not see at sea not only an equivalent, but no enemy at all, and meanwhile they lost ships almost daily. On June 23, on the way from Libava to Ust-Dvinsk, a M-78 submarine was destroyed by a torpedo from a German submarine. On June 24-26, while leaving Libava, the destroyer Lenin, the submarines S-1, M-71, M-80, M-83, Ronis and Speedola had to be blown up. The commander of the destroyer, captain-lieutenant Yu.M. Afanasiev, who led the destruction of hundred

those who were in the repair of ships, for an unauthorized, and therefore punishable initiative, were shot by order of Tributs. Then the command and the political department of the base with a clear conscience, "following the order of the Stavka", evacuated on boats, leaving the garrison "to repel the frenzied attacks of the Nazis" and break through to Vindava. Few managed to escape from the encirclement. "We have never prepared for the evacuation of our bases," says Admiral N.A., former chief of staff of the KBF. Panteleev, and therefore the retreat from Libau was tragic. I'm not going to blame anyone for this. We reaped the fruits of what we sowed: after all, we were going to fight "only on foreign territory." The fleet lost the most important naval base, the army - the 67th rifle division and its commander, Major General N.A. Dedayev, who died during the defense of the city. Regarding the future fate of the defenders, Admiral Panteleev frankly fantasizes: "Most of the sailors and infantrymen remained behind enemy lines, joined the partisans and selflessly fought against the invaders until the Baltic was liberated by our troops (!)".

The S-3 submarine, which left Libava for a breakthrough, was unable to dive under the command of Lieutenant Commander N.A. Kostromicheva was intercepted by two "schnellboats" from the 3rd flotilla and sunk after a half-hour artillery battle, the Germans picked up 20 people at the place of her death. On June 27, in the Gulf of Riga, boats of the 2nd flotilla attacked the destroyer Storozhevoy. A torpedo explosion tore off the ship's bow along with the superstructure and mast, and the commander, Captain 3rd Rank I.F., was killed. Lomakin and 84 crew members, the second half of the destroyer remained afloat and was towed to Tallinn, then to Kronstadt. On the same day, German boats heavily damaged and captured the TKA-47 torpedo boat, and the aircraft sank the TKA-27. On June 28, near Dago Island, the submarine Ch-149 torpedoed the Soviet M-99; S-10 went missing in Danzig Bay. In the abandoned Vindava, the Germans got five transports with a total displacement of about 10,000 tons.

On July 1, M-81 sank from the explosion of a bottom mine near the island of Vormsi, two people were saved; near the island of Saaremaa, minesweeper T-299 "Imanta" "privatized" in 1940 together with Latvia. On July 6, the T-216 hit a mine and instantly sank, on July 7 - TShch-101 Petrozavodsk, on the 9th - T-890 Burbot. On July 16, the destroyer Strashny was blown up, the bow was completely destroyed by the explosion, the ship was hardly towed to Kronstadt, and it did not go to sea until the end of the war. On July 18, the Tucha TFR was blown up on its own mine, the ship lost its rudder and propellers, 8 people died. During an attack on an enemy convoy, TKA-123 was destroyed by artillery fire. A day later, in the Moonsund Strait, having received a direct hit by an air bomb in the boiler room, the destroyer "Angry" exploded and sank, killing 35 crew members, injuring more than 100 people. On July 10, the transport "Rasma" with a displacement of 3200 tons was blown up by a mine and washed ashore. On July 21, a German submarine torpedoed the M-94 of Senior Lieutenant N.V. Dyakova, eleven sailors miraculously escaped. On the same day, the tanker "Railwayman" was killed by mines. On July 22, in the Gulf of Riga, in a battle with German boats, the icebreaker Lachplexis and the accompanying TKA-71, whose crew showed exceptional heroism, perished. The next day, the minelayer Ristna was blown up, but remained afloat. On July 26, a Finnish gunboat sank MShch-238 with artillery fire. On July 27, in the Irbensky Strait, covering the ships that laid minefields, the destroyer "Brave" was blown up and finished off with torpedoes. On July 29, she hit a mine and sank with the entire crew of the TShch-51 "Serpent", on July 30 - T-201 "Charge". On July 31, the T-203 "Cartridge" was heavily damaged by Finnish artillery.

Depressed by everyday losses, the naval authorities, including the flagship miner (!), Could not find an answer to the question why ships explode, even if they follow directly the minesweepers? And they remained in deep thought until the "most qualified specialists" in

they didn't explain to the fight against the mine danger that, they say, the enemy (and we, too, in the warehouse of the same flagship miner) have such mines - electromagnetic and acoustic, and special trawls are needed to deal with them.

That's how it is! - the "command" was surprised. [where can we get these trawls?

"It turned out," recalls Admiral Panteleev, "that the Marine Scientific and Technical Committee had long ago developed domestic electromagnetic and acoustic sweeps. They have already passed all the tests and received the highest marks. Now both trawls are being further improved. This statement shocked us all. It turns out that we have good trawls, but we want to make them even better, and in the meantime our ships are undermined and sinking, people are dying! The commander of the fleet requested at least two copies of trawls through Moscow ... "

On August 2, the S-11 submarine, commanded by Lieutenant Commander A.M., was killed by bottom mines. Serela, on August 3, the T-212 Shtag was killed by mines, on the 7th dive bombers sank the tanker Spinoza and damaged the destroyer Engels. She went on a military campaign and never got in touch with the S-6 submarine. On August 8, enemy aircraft sank TShch-76 "Val", the destroyer "Karl Marx", which killed 38 people. A small "hunter" MO-229 with the entire crew died next to the destroyer. On August 10, the transport VT-572 "Bartava" sank. || August was blown up by a mine and killed the T-213 "Krambol". The destroyer Steregushchiy and the transport Vyacheslav Molotov received heavy damage from mine explosions. Aviation drowned the Altai transport. In the Irben Strait, the minelayer "Surop" and the support vessel "Val" were killed with the entire crew. On August 13, German and Finnish torpedo boats sank transport and TShch-41 Lenvodput-12. Hit a mine and sank TShch-68. On August 15, the T-202 "Buy" mine and the transport "Krechen ha" died on a mine, on August 16 - the messenger ship "Artillerist". On August 18, the destroyer Stateny and its commander Captain 3rd rank N.N. were killed by a mine explosion. Alekseev, on the 19th torpedo boats sank the icebreaker Mary

54

Karoo" and TShch-80. On August 20, he died on mines MO-207, on the 21st - the Leeni transport and the Nord hydrographic vessel. The hospital ship Sibir sank from an air strike, killing more than 600 people. On August 23, in the Vyborg Bay, having received damage, the armored boat BKA-215 fell ashore and fell into the hands of the Finns. A day later, while escorting the convoy, the destroyer Engels was lost on a minefield near Cape Yuminla, 11 people out of 180 crew members were saved; minesweepers T-209 "Knecht" and T-214 "Bugel" ...

During the same period, the Baltic Fleet was able to record on its combat account an auxiliary vessel and a tanker sunk by S-11 and S-4 boats, a German submarine O-144 destroyed by a pike-307, as well as an enemy minesweeper and watchdog.

The rapid withdrawal of the Red Army from the Baltic created an extremely difficult situation for the fleet. Following Libava, Vindava and Riga fell, the entire basing system turned out to be violated and was under continuous strikes, two-thirds of the fuel reserves fell into the hands of the enemy. The situation of the 50,000-strong Soviet garrison in Tallinn, blockaded by units of four German infantry divisions, also did not cause optimism. Already in the first ten days of August, it became obvious that the troops and fleet would have to be withdrawn, but nevertheless the task of preparing for evacuation before the naval was not placed in command.

On August 19, the enemy reached the forefront of the defense of Tallinn. On the morning of the next day, after artillery preparation, the Germans went on the offensive along the entire front. The main blow was delivered from the east in the coastal sector of defense. For three days, with the support of aviation and 270 guns of naval, coastal, railway, corps and anti-aircraft artillery, the defenders of the base repelled enemy attacks. On August 25, Soviet troops retreated to the main line of defense. From that time on, the city and port were shot through to the full depth. Direct hits from artillery shells were received by the leader "Minsk" and the destroyer "Glorious", the transport "Lunacharsky" sank. The situation was becoming hopeless, but Tributs

had the strictest order of Voroshilov in his hands: there can be no question of withdrawal, and even quite the contrary, "to strike at the flank and rear." On this day, the Military Council of the Baltic Fleet, reporting the situation to the commander-in-chief of the direction, again asked for instructions in the event of a German breakthrough into the city, specifically noting that in such a situation, landing ground troops on transports would no longer be possible. Voroshilov forwarded the question to the Kremlin. Stalin was surprised: "What, are the ships still in Tallinn?"

At their own peril and risk, the naval command gradually removed materiel from Tallinn on single ships and small convoys. In order not to get on the lists of "alarmists", these transportations had to be hidden not only from the enemy, but also from vigilant authorities. Thus, it was possible to almost completely remove the arsenal, part of the ship repair enterprise, about 15 thousand tons of technical equipment and other cargo, evacuate about 17 thousand women and children, and up to 9 thousand wounded servicemen. Nevertheless, in the main base there remained many coastal institutions, large and small civilian ships, completely unnecessary for the conduct of hostilities.

On the morning of August 26, Admiral Tributs finally received a directive, at least a week late, to evacuate to Kronstadt. One day was allotted for the preparation of the operation.

When developing the transition plan, it was necessary to choose one of the three existing fairways. The southern one ran between the coast and the southern edge of the German Yuminda minefield. Until mid-August, more than 220 transports passed along this route, of which only one was blown up by a mine. But on August 12, by directive of the Military Council of the North-Western Direction, without asking the opinion of the sailors, Marshal Voroshilov, fearing the possible presence of enemy artillery batteries in the area of the village of Kunda, closed this area for navigation. The northern fairway, passing along the edge of the Finnish skerries, was the safest: there was a certain number of small enemy warships and almost no

was min. However, the one who proposed this route automatically fell under suspicion of wanting to hand over Soviet ships to the enemy. In addition, naval intelligence had no idea what forces the Germans managed to concentrate in the Finnish skerries.

Therefore, there was nothing to discuss in particular, and the choice fell on the central fairway, laid in the middle part of the Gulf of Finland, the most dangerous in terms of mines. The Yuminda barrier was set up here, which the Germans constantly reinforced. During the period from 11 to 27 August, 9 convoys passed through the fairway. At the same time, out of 40 ships and vessels, 14 (35%) were lost and damaged from mine explosions and enemy aircraft. The Yuminda barrier was never cleared or reconnoitered by Soviet ships, its borders were unknown, the number of mines "no one could tell us."

The gigantic caravan had to cross a minefield of 30 lines of mines and mine defenders "head on". Its density on the intended path of movement was at least 150 mines and 105 mine defenders per mile of front, for each cable of the minesweeping strip there were at least 15-16 mines. A barrier of such a density could be normally forced only if it was conducted during daylight hours, which made it possible to detect and destroy undercut mines, behind two or three rows of contact trawls with obligatory fencing of the edge of the trawl strip. But the 10 basic, 18 mobilized and 26 boat minesweepers that ensured the transition were clearly not enough for this (according to the estimates of the miners, at least a hundred minesweepers were required for such an operation). In reality, ships and vessels could only follow one or two rows of trawls, and some of them had to follow independently. For reasons of secrecy, the fairway was not lined, and it was not possible to do this in the course of the breakthrough, since the minesweeping milestones, including the luminous ones, had already been loaded onto one of the transports. And

no one knew which one. There was also no required number of spare trawls. Out of 26 boats

57

of the Rybinets type, armed with Schulz trawls, and several boats of the KM and KLT types with boat trawls, only two were used for their intended purpose. As for the calculation of the probable number of losses in the ship's composition during the breakthrough, then, according to Admiral Panteleev, "under the roar of shells exploding in the harbor, we did not particularly try to focus on such unpleasant figures."

The breakthrough from Tallinn to Kronstadt was supposed to be carried out in march order, consisting of a detachment of the main forces, a detachment of cover, a rear guard and four convoys. The detachment of the main forces under the command of Admiral Tributs included 28 warships, including the flagship cruiser Kirov, 3 destroyers, 4 submarines, 6 small hunters. The cover detachment, which consisted of the leader "Minsk", two destroyers, one submarine, patrol and torpedo boats, was commanded by Rear Admiral Yu.A. Panteleev, rearguard - Rear Admiral Yu.F. Rall holding the flag on the destroyer Kalinin.

The detachment of the main forces was to cover the first and second convoys at the passage from Cape Yuminda to Gogland Island, the covering detachment was to protect the second and third convoys at the passage from Keri Island to Windloe Island, and the rear guard was to cover the third and fourth convoys from the rear. Instead of creating one heavily guarded convoy of ships of the main classes and the largest vessels, Soviet naval commanders divided their forces into seven groups of completely different types - from schooners to destroyers - floating craft, violating one of the most important principles of military art.

A special detachment was formed from the forces of the Kronstadt naval base under the command of Captain 2nd Rank I.G. Svyatov. It consisted of 12 minesweepers, 4 patrol ships, 6 torpedo boats, 8 small hunters, 2 tugboats, 4 motorboats and rescue boats and was deployed to Gogland Island. He was supposed to protect the convoys from attacks by torpedo boats and submarines in the final section, providing them with assistance behind the trawls, and provide assistance to those in distress.

58

Submarines M-98 and M-102 were sent to positions in the area of the Porkkala lighthouse and near the approaches to Helsinki with the task of "sinking the enemy's military and merchant ships", covering the departing fleet from the west.

It was not possible to provide permanent air cover along the entire route due to the remoteness of the airfields. Only in the final section of the "trajectory" it was planned to take 65 fighters into the air with the task of protecting warships in every possible way in the first place.

On August 27, at 11 o'clock, Tributs ordered the troops to withdraw and board them on ships. The withdrawal was covered by coastal artillery and barrage fire from ships. First of all, the ships were filled with the wounded, employees of the institutions of the fleet and individual units; at the same time they loaded military equipment and the most valuable materiel. On the cruiser "Kirov" were placed the gold reserves, the Military Council of the Fleet and those members of the government and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Soviet Estonia who did not defect to the Germans. The enemy fired intensely at the city and port, and his aircraft in small groups of 5-9 aircraft bombed transports and ships throughout the daylight hours. At 18:00, subversive teams began to destroy valuable objects and materiel. In the Russian-Baltic harbor and at the Pakri lighthouse, steam locomotives and wagons (more than a thousand) rolled down the track into the sea. In the Merchant Harbor, first wagons with ammunition were blown up, and then an arsenal. An oil storage facility was raised in the Minnaya Harbor. There were still a lot of watercraft left in the port, some of which were destroyed by the enemy, and the rest were flooded by the crews at the entrances to the harbor.

The landing on the ships of the main forces of the 19th Corps began at about 10 p.m. and continued until dawn. To ensure their withdrawal, the artillery of the fleet and the corps for two hours conducted a massive motionless barrage fire.

In total, over 20 thousand servicemen and civilians, about 7.5 thousand civilians were taken on board.

59

persons. With the help of tugboats, ships full of people and equipment were taken to the area where convoys were assembled and formed. After midnight, about 4,000 fighters and commanders remained on the berths of the Bekker harbor, they were never followed, despite the fact that four transports left Tallinn unloaded. .

The first convoy was supposed to start moving on August 27 at 22:00, and the last one was to leave the raid on August 28 at 10:30. However, the wind, which increased to 7 points, prevented. Minesweepers could not follow with set trawls. Tributs ordered all ships and vessels to anchor off the islands of Naisaar and Aegna until the weather improves. Before shooting from anchor, up to 30 schooners, tugboats, motorized boats and the submarine Shch-301, which returned from a military campaign, joined the convoys. Due to the forced parking, the exit dates were postponed, so it was necessary to force the minefields not during the day, as envisaged by the plan, but at night. For some reason, the German command failed to take advantage of the situation and did not launch a massive air strike on the accumulation of ships, boats and vessels in 220 pennants.

On August 28 at 11.35, after the wind died down, the ships began to weigh anchor. The detachment of the main forces began to move about 16 hours. At 17.15, a cover detachment set out, overtaking the transport and at the same time covering them from the west. The rearguard held out at the exit from the Tallinn raid until dark, covering the general retreat. At this time, the barrage detachment mined harbors and raids and the area near the island of Aegna.

The convoys followed the low-speed trawlers at a speed of no more than 6 knots. Detachments of the main forces and covering, each behind 5 minesweepers, moved at a speed of 10-12 knots. On anti-mine ships, there were only towed undercutting trawls, which significantly reduced the speed of the transition. In 2-3 hours after shooting from anchors, the ships and vessels stretched out in one line with a length of more than 15 miles. In total, in the breakthrough, according to Rear Admiral R.A. Zubkov, 153 warships participated and

60

boats and 75 ships, including one cruiser, 10 destroyers, 9 patrol boats, 3 gunboats, 11 submarines and 10 base minesweepers.

A detachment of the main forces went ahead, then the first convoy, a covering detachment, the third and fourth convoys, and in parallel, a little to the north, the second convoy went. In the second half of the day, several raids were carried out by enemy aircraft. Floating mines appeared, on one of which at 18 o'clock VT-530 "Ella" from the first convoy was blown up. The ship and over 900 people, including 693 wounded, sank within 2-3 minutes. When the ship Neptune approached the place of Ella's death, only 49 people were floating on the surface of the water. Soon the icebreaker "Valdemars" sank from enemy bombs, was severely damaged and the transport "Vironia" sank, on which the departments of the headquarters and the political department of the fleet were evacuated. The rescuer "Saturn" died on a mine.

In the area north of Cape Yuminda, the leader "Minsk" and the destroyer "Skory" repelled an attack by five German torpedo boats of the 1st Flotilla, Lieutenant Commander Birnbacher, with artillery fire. A few minutes before dark, in the area of Keri Island, a detachment of the main forces, followed by others, entered the Yuminda minefield.

The night of August 29 was the most difficult. The formation of five basic minesweepers provided reliable cover for the guided ships in a strip about 3 cable wide. However, he

was good until the paravanthals were interrupted by explosions of mines or mine defenders. At three minesweepers, followed by a detachment of the main forces, the trawls were killed by mine defenders. At about 20:00, the TShch "Crab" died on a mine, then the TShch "Barometr". The continuity of the swept lane was broken, in the dark it was not possible to shoot all the cut and floated mines, they were pushed away from the sides with poles and hands. Avoiding mines, the ships broke down and were blown up. Of the detachment of the main forces, the S-5 submarine was the first to die, only 9 sailors escaped from it. Then it exploded and sank with most of the crew of the squadron

61

the destroyer Yakov Sverdlov, and the destroyer Proud was heavily damaged.

The cover detachment found itself in a critical situation. At about 9 pm, out of the five base minesweepers that escorted the ships, four broke away from the detachment and joined the main forces. Admiral Panteleev's attempt to return them to their place ended in vain, Admiral Tributs, who was most concerned about the fate of the flagship, put the stray trawlers in guard of the Kirov cruiser. Left without anti-mine support, the ships, one after another, were blown up by mines. The leader of the destroyers Minsk and the destroyer Slavny were seriously damaged. When trying to take in tow the leader helplessly drifting in a minefield, the destroyer Skory was killed; The newest ship, which served in the Baltic Fleet for 28 days, broke in half and sank 15 minutes after the explosion in the area of the aft engine room. The rear guard suffered the heaviest losses, since from the very beginning it followed without anti-mine support. All hope was only on paravanes, which, as it turned out in practice, did not divert mines at low speed, but, on the contrary, pulled them up to the side. From 22:00 to 24:00, the destroyers Kalinin, Artem, and Volodarsky, the latest "novelties" of the Baltic Fleet, the patrol ships Cyclone, Sneg, and Topaz, perished on mines.

Convoys also suffered significant losses due to weak anti-mine guards, lack of joint navigation skills with trawlers and a large number of floating mines. In the first convoy, the stern of Shch-301 was torn off by an explosion, 13 crew members were rescued. From the composition of the second convoy, the BT-545 "Everita" quickly sank, which had on board a garrison from the island of Naisaar numbering about 1,500 fighters. Sweets managed no more than 10 people. Died on mines VT-584 "Naysaar" with 2500 thousand people on board. In the third convoy, the Luga transport was blown up and left by the team, carrying almost one and a half thousand wounded. Most of them took on

62

board VT-529 "Skrunda", which left Tallinn empty. The transport "Balkhash" perished, the garrison of Paldiski with a total number of 2000 people was evacuated on it. In the fourth convoy, the I-8 gunboat exploded.

Under these conditions, around midnight, Tributs ordered all ships and vessels to anchor and wait for the sun to rise in order to continue moving east in the morning. The decision, generally correct, was caused solely by ignorance of the situation, since by this time the minefield had actually been overcome.

With the onset of dawn, the warships weighed anchor and, leaving the convoys, hid in the direction of Kronstadt with the maximum possible speed. Slow-moving and low-maneuverable, practically unarmed ships with troops on board were left unguarded. There was no fighter cover. At 7.15 enemy aircraft appeared over the defenseless transports. German pilots acted with impunity, as in exercises, choosing the largest targets. This led to heavy losses, especially in personnel.

Thus, more than 900 people died, including 700 wounded fighters, on the cargo ship Kalpaks, which withstood 40 attacks. The boats were picked up by 70 survivors. Around the island

The VT-546 "Ausuma" was killed by air bombs. Six damaged transports sank on the Western Yuyugland Reach, two transports and the floating workshop "Hammer and Sickle" threw themselves on the rocks at the southern tip of Gogland, the transport "Alev" a few miles west of the island of Lavansaari, the transport "Kazakhstan" lost control, with up to 5,000 military personnel and civilians on board, off Wainllo Island.

Detachments of warships, having overcome 170 miles, arrived in Kronstadt on August 29 at 18:00. On the morning of the 30th, the rest of the surviving ships and vessels arrived. Beaten "Kazakhstan" second assistant to captain L.N. Zagorulko and the crew members remaining on the ship managed to commission and drag them to Kronstadt, for which they were all awarded

63

awarded military orders and marked in the order of the Supreme Commander No. 303 as "a group of daredevils selflessly devoted to the Motherland". The captain of "Kazakhstan" V.S. Kalitaev, thrown overboard by a blast wave and picked up from the water by the Shch-322 submarine, arrived at the base a week earlier than his ship, for which he was shot as a coward and a deserter. Later he was awarded the Order of the Red Banner of War posthumously.

The detachment of Captain 2nd Rank Svyatov gathered people from the transports and islands in distress until September 8th. The chief of staff of the fleet reported: "All military units ... that left the battle were put on transports and taken out of Tallinn and Paldiski, not a single ship or military unit remained in Tallinn." On August 31, the People's Commissar of the Navy reported to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief that during the breakthrough from Tallinn to Kronstadt, 8 warships, 12 transports and 8 other auxiliary vessels were lost, not a single serviceable cannon was left to the enemy, not a single unit - all of them were either taken out but, either destroyed.

Upon closer calculation, the figures turned out to be even more "unpleasant": during the evacuation, the fleet lost 22 warships and boats, including 5 destroyers, 3 patrol boats, 2 submarines, as well as 43 auxiliary vessels, and almost half of them had displacement over 1000 tons. In addition, 38 ships and ships were abandoned or sunk in the port of Tallinn. Approximately 7,700 military personnel and more than 3,000 civilians died at the crossing. According to the enemy, in Tallinn, the Germans captured 11,432 Soviet soldiers and commanders, 293 serviceable guns, 304 machine guns, 91 armored cars, 2 armored trains, 4,000 mines, 3,500 torpedoes.

12,738 servicemen and civilians of the Baltic Fleet and the 10th Rifle Corps were delivered to Kronstadt and Oranienbaum, who later became actively involved in the defense of Leningrad.

With its "unparalleled breakthrough in history", the Baltic Fleet, having lost more than 100 ships and

64

Xia, again "threw the plans of the enemy." True, Comrade Stalin at first thought about whether to send the command of the fleet in full force for such dubious achievements to the tribunal, organizing for the admirals in hot pursuit "long nightly conversations with prosecutors and investigators", which, as twice as two, proved that it was the sailors are to blame for the surrender of Tallinn, the defeat of the Red Army on the land front and the death of the Paris Commune: "Everyone wanted to find the real culprit of our failures, the failure of all our victorious plans and calculations. Even the great people did not yet realize that we are experiencing the collapse of some provisions of our pre-war doctrine, it was not before! We need a living culprit!"

But in the end, Admiral Tributs was awarded the Order of Nakhimov, which, according to the status, is due for outstanding victories at sea. And at the same time, divisional commissar V.N. Lebedev.

(August - early September 1941)

"Finnish Front"

A tense situation developed towards the end of July north of Leningrad. On the Karelian Isthmus, on July 31, the Finnish South-Eastern Army launched a general offensive. It included the 4th Army Corps (4th, 8th, 12th Infantry Divisions) of Lieutenant General Oesh, the 5th Army Corps (10th Infantry Division and Cavalry Brigade), the 2nd Army Corps (2, 15th, 18th Infantry Divisions) Major General Laatikainen. In addition, the 11th and 7th infantry divisions of the 7th corps were to attack Sortavala, which soon formed the 1st Army Corps specially created for this purpose under the command of Major General Myakinen.

The Finns were opposed by the 23rd Soviet Army as part of the 19th Rifle Corps (142nd and 115th Rifle Divisions), the 50th Rifle Corps (43rd, 70th and 123rd Rifle Divisions), the 27th (Kexholmsky) and the 28th (Vyborg) fortified areas. The army also included the 24th, 28th, 43rd, 573rd corps artillery regiments, the 101st howitzer artillery regiment, the 108th and 519th howitzer artillery regiments of the sick power of the RGK, the 20th separate mortar battalion (48 mortars of 120 mm caliber), 27 -Y and 241st separate anti-aircraft divisions, as well as the 198th mechanized division from the 10th mechanized corps. The aviation assigned to the army included

66

5th mixed air division, 41st bomber air regiment, 15th and 19th corrective squadrons.

The Finns dealt the main blow with the 2nd Army Corps in the Keksholm direction with the aim of reaching the western coast of Lake Ladoga, occupying the Hiytola railway junction, cutting off the grouping of Soviet troops in Sortavala from the south and dismembering the 23rd Army. In the future, Mannerheim planned to develop the offensive towards the Vuoksi River, force it and go to the rear of the Vyborg grouping of the Northern Front. The 4th Army Corps was preparing to join the Navyborg direction.

The 142nd and 15th Soviet divisions, defending on a front of 06 kilometers, could not oppose the enemy's tactics. The Finns infiltrated in separate groups to the rear, went out to communications, disrupted communication, disrupted the supply of ammunition, blocked strong points. In general, the battles on the Karelian Isthmus are not covered at all in our history. What, for example, can be gleaned from the collective work "Unconquered Leningrad", except for vague stories about heroism: "So, soldiers and officers of the 461st rifle regiment of the 142nd rifle division of the 23rd army under the command of Colonel V.A. Trubachev, in ten days of fighting on the Karelian Isthmus, they destroyed almost half (?) of the enemy soldiers advancing on them. For courage and courage, Colonel V.A. Trubachev and machine gunner A.I. Zakhodsky were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. Half is how much? And what was the "whole"? What are our losses?

On August 5, the 198th mechanized and 142nd rifle divisions tried to counterattack, but suffered heavy losses and retreated to their original lines. On August 6, the Finns—apparently, the second, undestroyed half—continued their offensive and by the end of August 9, they reached the area of Lahlenpohja, Kurkieki, and Hiitola to Ladoga. As a result, the right flank of the 23rd Army was cut into three isolated from each other and pressed against the Ladoga

67

group lake. Their total number was about 40 thousand commanders and Red Army men.

In the first, surrounded to the north and northwest of Lahdenpokhya, a mixture of units of the 23rd and 7th armies was formed - regiments of the 168th, 71st and 115th rifle divisions. The second grouping, consisting of the 142nd Rifle and 198th Mechanized Divisions, ended up in the area north and northeast of

Khitola. The consolidated group of border guards under the command of Colonel S.I. Donskoy was surrounded west of Kexholm.

The Ladoga military flotilla came to their aid. Order about her. creation on the basis of the VMUZ Training Detachment was signed on the third day of the war. The flotilla included gunboats - mostly hastily armed dirt-carrying scows of the NKVD Spetsgidrostroy, minesweepers - they are also mobilized river tugs, armored boats and small hunters. From 12 to 22 August, these ships evacuated the troops of the 142nd Rifle and 198th Mechanized Divisions to the area of the old border. Parts of the 168th division were first transferred to the nearby island of Va Laam, and then to the Kolpino area. The evacuation was covered by gunboats "Bira", "Bureya", "Olekma", "Selemdzha", "Sheksna", two minesweepers and ten boats. In total, 26 thousand fighters, 155 guns, about 800 vehicles and tractors were taken out of isolated bridgeheads in ten days. It is difficult to say for certain who led the naval part of the operation, since in August the flotilla changed three commanders. ,

To prevent further advance of the enemy in the southeast direction, the commander of the 23rd Army, Lieutenant General M.N. Gerasimov threw the 265th Rifle Division, which had arrived from the Stavka reserve, into the gap.

On August 10, the Finns repulsed the Soviet counterattack at Hiitola and the next day resumed the offensive throughout the Karelian Isthmus. The 4th Army Corps began active combat operations against the Vyborg grouping. In the rear of her, having crossed Vuoksi, the 2nd

68

frame. Now the threat of encirclement hung over the three divisions of the left wing of the 23rd Army. On August 16, Colonel Swenson's 7th Infantry Division took Sortavala. In general, the Finns competently beat us piece by piece, and we repelled the offensive of "outnumbered enemy troops."

On August 20, Soviet troops on the left flank began to retreat to the former Mannerheim Line, at the same time fortifications were blown up, coastal defense units were curtailed and evacuated. The batteries located on the islands of the Vyborg Bay, the ships of the skerry detachment of ships and the destroyers Strong and Stoyky sent to their aid covered the withdrawal of troops with their fire and repelled enemy landings. For actions on the coastal sector of the front, a combined regiment of sailors was created.

However, the planned withdrawal did not work. On August 24, the Finns landed one regiment south of Vyborg and cut off the coastal railway and highway leading to Leningrad. The attempt to destroy the landing was not successful. The Vyborg grouping of Soviet troops was outflanked from the south and southeast; The 43rd Red Banner, 115th, 123rd and 265th rifle divisions were surrounded. With the help of a combined regiment of sailors, separate units, having lost all tanks and most of the artillery, made their way to the Gulf of Finland in the Koivisto area. Here, with the support of coastal batteries from the islands of the Bjerk archipelago, they held a bridgehead for several days. On August 31, their evacuation to Leningrad began, for which ships and barges were allocated. In total, the fleet took out 27 thousand boys and commanders, 188 artillery pieces, 950 vehicles.

Stalin's dissatisfaction with the actions of the command of the Leningrad Front, which requested permission to regroup forces, was expressed in the requirements of the Headquarters of August 28:

"Your performances today are reminiscent of blackmail. The commanders of the armies are intimidating you, and you, in turn, apparently decided to intimidate the Headquarters with all sorts of horrors

69

about breakthroughs, aggravation of the situation, and so on. Of course, if you do nothing in order to demand from your subordinates, but you are only an extra passing on complaints

armies, you will then have to surrender Leningrad in a few days, but the Headquarters does not exist to indulge blackmailing demands and assumptions.

The Headquarters permits you to withdraw units from the Vyborg Line, but at the same time the Headquarters orders you that under no circumstances should the units leave the prepared line of the Mannerheim Line. The bet forbids you to expose the Luga Bay and give it to your opponent. Even if the 8th Army has to retreat a little, it must still cover the Luga Bay along with the peninsula at all costs.

The Headquarters demands that you finally stop being an extra and a specialist in retreat and enter into your proper role of commander, inspiring the army and raising the morale of the troops.

Two and a half hours later, valuable instructions from the leadership were sent to the Military Council of the 23rd armies:

"A characteristic feature in your command and control of the army, the Military Council of the Front notes ignorance of the situation, the lack of accurate data about the enemy and the position of your troops, uncertainty in actions and unsteady command and control of troops. You cover up all this with talk about taking measures, about the absence of reserves, and, as a conclusion from all this, you turn to the Military Council of the front for permission to withdraw army troops to the old state border.

This defeatist statement of yours about the withdrawal of troops to the old state border sounds strange and monstrous. In this decision, you show instability that borders on cowardice, and instead of mobilizing your will and the will of your subordinate troops to the maximum in the fight for Leningrad, you succumb to the will of an insolent enemy.

The Military Council demands to stop being specialists in retreat, it demands from you and the member of the Military Council to truly stand at the head of the army, breaking these retreat moods in yourself, for real, for real.

70

Bolshevik take on raising the spirit and will of the subordinate troops to defend Leningrad.

While our generals were gathering the Bolshevik will into a fist, the Finns took Vyborg and Kivenen on August 29, Raivola on August 30, and Terioki on August 31.

Under the onslaught of the enemy, the retreat of the Soviet divisions that did not fall into the "cauldrons" turned into a flight, during which units and formations lost almost all weapons and military equipment. For example, the 198th Mechanized Division, Major General V.V. Kryukova from her entire arsenal managed to save only 6 heavy machine guns.

The Finnish nannies, "leaving the pillboxes", captured more than 64 thousand Red Army soldiers and painters, including the commander of the 43rd rifle division, Major General V.V. Kirpichnikov.

Soviet propaganda explained the blatant defeat on the "Finnish front" by the huge numerical superiority of the enemy and the fact that "selected Nazi troops" fought on the side of the Finns. The August battles on the Karelian Isthmus were described in the newspapers approximately in the following way: "There were few soldiers left in the gun crews. The junior lieutenant commanded the battle and at the same time fired himself, alternately from two cannons. The Nazis offered the gunners to surrender, promising to save their lives. Volleys rang out in response. The Nazis retreated from the battery in superstitious horror ... Kokorin was losing his last strength when a hefty fascist officer (?) knocked him down and fell down with all the weight of his body:

- Give up, Russ!

- No matter how! shouted Kokorin and pulled out the grenade ring. Yeeroi the orderly died undefeated." (The post-war generations of Soviet historians, through painstaking research, managed to establish that the border guard medical instructor actually shouted: "Cheks do not surrender!" See History of the Leningrad Military District.)

By decision of the Military Council of the Leningrad Front, adopted [September, 23rd Army, in koto command

71

the swarm was joined by Major General A.I. Cherepanov, occupied the line of the Karelian fortified area (No. 22), which ran along the border of 1939, from the Gulf of Finland along the Sestra River to Lake Ladoga.

Regarding the further course of events, the opinions of the chroniclers differ. According to the Soviet version: "During September, the 23rd Army, in cooperation with the Red Banner Baltic Fleet and the Ladoga military flotilla, repelled all attempts by the Finnish troops to break through our defenses at the turn of the Karelian fortified region and, having inflicted heavy damage on the enemy, forced him to cross to the defense. Having entrenched themselves on this line, the Soviet troops successfully repulsed enemy attacks. The plan of the fascist German and Finnish command to break through to Leningrad with a strike across the Karelian Isthmus and, together with the troops of Army Group North, to seize it failed.

It is not difficult to disrupt the actions of the enemy, which he did not intend to take. The utterly defeated 23rd Army was capable of this only in its condition. The Finns had no plan to "master" Le-

Ningrad, neither together with the Germans, nor without them. True, in August and September, first Field Marshal Keitel, then Chief of Staff of the OKW, General Jodl, twice appealed to the top Finnish leadership with proposals to take part "in this enterprise", but both times they received a firm refusal, which was also noted by General Haller: "The command of the Finnish army does not want its troops to advance from the Karelian Isthmus beyond the old state border." Marshal Mannerheim, mindful of the limited human potential of the country, sought to save the lives of his soldiers. Attacking Leningrad in a situation where the outcome of the global conflict was still vague and the winner had not been determined seemed unprofitable from a political point of view as well. A certain role was played by the diplomatic pressure exerted on Helsinki at the request of the Kremlin, which cooled the ardor of the ideologists of Greater Finland. At the beginning of September, the British Prime Minister informed Stalin: "We will put every possible pressure on

72

against Finland, including an immediate declaration that we will declare war on her if she advances beyond the old borders. We ask the United States to take all necessary steps to influence Finland." The Finns themselves quite deliberately distanced themselves from the Germans, demonstrating to the world that they were waging their own just war with the Soviets. (This position justified itself in the future: unlike other allies of the "thousand-year-old" Reich that collapsed in 1945, who were imprisoned in the "socialist camp", Finland was not occupied and retained its independence.)

That is why the troops of General Cherepanov, reinforced by the 265th and 291st rifle divisions, successfully "repulsed all attacks" of the enemy who went over to the defensive. The front on the Karelian Isthmus stabilized until June 1944.

"German Front"

All this time, the Wehrmacht High Command was planning a new attack on Leningrad, knowing full well that time was on the side of the Russians. However, due to difficulties in supply and in the implementation of the regrouping of forces, the deadline was pushed back six times. Back in mid-July, the command of Army Group North came to the conclusion that the available forces were not enough to

mastery of Leningrad on the move. Therefore, it was supposed to first take possession of the Novgorod-Narva line. But even this operation, according to Leeb, could not be started until the 16th Army had completed the defeat of the Soviet troops near Nevel and reliably secured its right flank, and the 18th Army had brought up infantry divisions. Hitler approved this decision by Directive No. 33 of July 19, but he was unnerved by the delays and the uncertainty of the situation on the flanks of the Soviet-German front. On July 21, he flew to Leeb's headquarters and demanded that the field marshal take the city as quickly as possible, destroy the Baltic Fleet and capture all its bases on the coast. At this meeting, Hitler declared that Leningrad was the "cradle of the revolution."

73

and Moscow is only a "geographical concept." "The Führer attaches no importance to the capture of Moscow," Halder wrote in his military diary.

In addition, the Führer considered it very important not to give the Soviet command the opportunity to withdraw troops from Leningrad and use them in other directions. Therefore, he insisted on concentrating the main efforts of the Army Group "North" in the direction of Novgorod, Lake Ladoga in order to intercept the main communications and attract here the 3rd Panzer Group of General Hoth, which at that time was fighting northeast of Smolensk. Von Leeb agreed with the Führer, but insisted that the Novgorod direction was unsuitable for tank formations.

Hitler then repeated his ideas to the Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces, Field Marshal Brauchitsch, identifying Leningrad - the "bastion of Bolshevism", the most important industrial center and base for domination in the Baltic - as the first immediate goal of the Wehrmacht's offensive. Both Brauchitsch and his chief of staff, General Halder, agreed with the Führer, but categorically objected to the pro-Moscow direction. Nevertheless, on July 23, Hitler signed an "addition to Directive No. 33", in which the transfer of the 3rd Panzer Group and the weakening of the onslaught on he ordered the 3rd Panzer Group to be temporarily subordinated to Army Group North with the task of "providing the right flank of the latter and encircling the enemy in the Leningrad region." Halder, actually sabotaging this, in his opinion, "meaningless order", informed Leeb on July 25 that he would receive Hoth's divisions, but not earlier than August 5; three days later, that deadline was pushed back to 15 August.

A specific task for Army Group North was set in OKW Directive No. 34 of July 30, which canceled the previous one. The directive ordered Field Marshal Leeb to clear Estonia of the enemy, continue the attack on Leningrad, delivering the main blow between Lake Ilmen and the Narva River, and establish contact with the Finnish army. To support Leeb from Army Group Center

74

the 8th Aviation Corps was allocated. In addition to the directive, the Headquarters emphasized that it was necessary to complete the operation against Leningrad "before the start of the offensive in the Moscow direction." The German command sought to "finish" Leningrad as quickly as possible, to which it remained 100 km, in order to then fall on Moscow with all its might, on August 4, at the headquarters of Army Group Center, the Führer announced that, according to his calculations, the task of capturing Leningrad will be completed by 20 August, and the transfer of Panzer Group Gotha to the north "is no longer necessary."

The mood of General Halder changed from bright hopes to despondency and back:

"August 2. The commander-in-chief was at a meeting in the army group. After his visit, I lost the last signs of a clear idea of what was happening. The army group did not make any progress in the offensive ...

| August. Our last forces are thrown into the battle. Each new regrouping within the army groups requires from us extreme effort and unproductive expenditure of human

forces and technical resources. All this causes nervousness and dissatisfaction among the command and an ever-increasing tendency to interfere in all details. Any intervention in details, which in this case is by no means an order (!), but wishes and recommendations, naturally, is associated with great danger. We do not know the specific conditions under which events develop. When they develop more slowly than we want, then we immediately think of insufficient desire and zeal, or even of malicious arbitrariness on the ground ... The general situation shows more and more clearly that the colossus Russia, which deliberately prepared for war, despite difficulties inherent in countries with a totalitarian regime were us underestimated...

12th of August. Army Group "North": The troops continue to successfully advance ... "

"Halder's reaction," says the English military historian Alan Clarke, "was typical of

75

all the Germans who came face to face with the extraordinary extravagance of the Russians in battle. At first, the German was delighted: he counted the heads of the enemies, measured the miles traveled, compared them with his achievements in the West, and came to the conclusion that victory was already around the corner. Then distrust: such reckless spending cannot continue, the Russians, no doubt, take it to the gun, in a few days they will run out of steam. Then some kind of wailing anxiety: an endless, aimless repetition of counterattacks, the desire to give ten Russian lives for one German one, the immensity of the territory, its cloudy horizon.

The military councils of the North-Western direction and the Northern Front took urgent measures to strengthen the near approaches to Leningrad and strengthen the troops defending there. On July 23, the Luga operational group was divided into three independent sections - Kingiseppsky, Luga and eastern, with their subordination directly to the front. As part of the Kingisepp defense section under the command of Major General V.V. Semash, who received the task of preventing the enemy from breaking through from the south along the Gdovskoye highway to Narva and through Kingisepp to Leningrad, entered the 90th, 118th and 191st rifle divisions, the 2nd and 4th divisions of the people's militia, parts of the coastal defense of the Baltic Fleet, 14 1st artillery anti-tank brigade, armored train No. 60, 519th howitzer artillery regiment of the RGK, cadets of the infantry school named after S.M. Kirov and training tank regiment. Luga section of Major General A.N. Astanin, covering the roads to Leningrad from the south-west, included the 111th, 177th and 235th rifle, 24th tank divisions, the 1st regiment of the 3rd division of the people's militia, the regiment of Artillery courses for the improvement of command personnel, 260th and 262nd machine gun and artillery battalions, division of the Leningrad Artillery School. In the eastern sector of defense, Major General F.N. Starikov included the 70th, 237th, 128th rifle and 21st tank divisions, the 1st division of the people's militia and the 1st mountain rifle brigade, the 261st and 263rd

76

pulpates. From its reserve for the defense of Leningrad, the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command transferred the 265th, 268th, 272nd and 291st rifle divisions to the Northern Front. On July 31, the eastern section was transformed into the Novgorod Army Group, and on August 4, into the 48th Army of the North-Western Front under the command of Lieutenant General S.D. Akimov.

With a huge effort, but without a single plan, taking into account the terrain and without linking with neighboring areas, under the leadership of random people, the construction of fortified field-type areas was carried out, in particular Krasnogvardeisky - one of the most important defense links. In all these activities, the cordon principle was initially laid down, which made the Soviet defense ineffective. For two years, watching the actions of the Wehrmacht in Europe, our generals did not understand anything. They evenly distributed forces and assets along the entire front, although the roads that allowed the use of mobile units could be counted on the fingers of one hand, did not have operational reserves in depth, and ignored engineering

provision and training of troops. Women dug ditches and trenches, but the soldiers were not taught this; they did not have a entrenching tool, and Soviet charters did not provide for "defencism". The war was considered a simple matter: an attack, defeat of the enemy, a meal, a Komsomol meeting or a rally. As a result, military comrades who arrived at the end of July to check the condition of the areas, firing positions for artillery and machine guns were chosen poorly, and "the equipment of the strip with explosive barriers is of a random nature."

From the sea, the city was covered by ships and aircraft of the Baltic Fleet. On July 10, the installation of sea coastal batteries began in the land defense system of Leningrad. Tens of thousands of sailors were transferred ashore to the marine rifle brigades, which then joined the army formations.

77

In addition, the Headquarters planned to organize a counteroffensive by August 3-4, the purpose of which was to defeat the enemy with strikes from Staraya Russa and from the Luga line, reach the Velikaya River, return Pskov and Ostrov. Then the deadline was moved to August 12.

The Germans started four days earlier (just at this time, the Pravda newspaper published a series of materials authoritatively proving that "the collapse of the Wehrmacht is inevitable in the near future"). On August 8, Reinhardt's 41st motorized corps, supported by the 1st Infantry Division of the 38th Army Corps, went on the offensive from the bridgehead on the Luga River in the direction of Krasnogvardeysk. Although the adversary attacked from the bridgeheads, on which he accumulated strength for four weeks, only the 90th rifle and 2nd division of the people's militia opposed him in this sector. The rest of the formations of General Semashko's group were inactive, waiting for their turn. On August 10, near Luga, Manstein struck, in whose subordination, after all the regroupings, remained the 3rd motorized, 269th infantry and the "watchdogs of bloody Hitler" -
., SS division "Police".

Göpner took the 8th tank at his disposal and used it to "clean up" the rear.

Attempts to overcome the Kingisepp sector and the defense near Luga on the move were repulsed by Soviet troops. According to the Germans, the fighting here was heavy and cost significant losses. In particular, the SS division, which staged a full-length psychic attack with deployed standards, lost 2,000 purebred Aryans killed and wounded, and the division commander, General Mülferstedt, who staged an idiotic performance, also perished. In addition, General Popov decided to reinforce the Kingisepp grouping with two more divisions - the 1st Red Banner Tank Division (370 tanks, of course, "obsolete", and 53 armored vehicles) and the 1st Guards Militia.

However, on August 12, on the southern flank of the Luga frontier, two army corps of the 16th army of General Bush and the SS division "Totenkopf" attached to them, after three

During the daytime battle, they rammed the defenses of the newly formed 48th Army in the Shimsk area and rushed to Novgorod. The Soviet units, disorganized by the strikes of the 8th Luftwaffe air corps and having suffered heavy losses, began to withdraw to the north and were later transferred to the Northern Front. All attempts by General Akimov to organize a counterattack from Batetskaya to the flank of the Germans by the forces of the 70th, 237th rifle divisions and the 1st division of the people's militia failed. With the enemy's entry into the railroad line Leningrad-Dno, the Kirov division of the people's volunteer corps was almost completely cut off from the main forces.

The defeat in the Novgorod direction was due not so much to German superiority in forces as to defects in the organization of defense. Five Soviet divisions and one brigade held a front of 60 km (according to pre-war views, a rifle division could firmly defend a strip 10 km wide) against seven enemy divisions, and this is a completely acceptable balance of forces for the defending side, if she knew how to defend herself, or at least dig in. In fact, the Soviet positions were poorly equipped

trenches, dugouts and communications. There were 705 rifle and 328 machine gun cells for the entire army. Almost no wire and minefields were used. Perhaps they were not enough, but nothing can explain the complete neglect of camouflage and reconnaissance. There were no cut-off positions, firing points of exclusively frontal action were used in the fire system. The anti-tank ditches were not defended by the troops, and the German tanks easily overcame them (the Germans had practically no tanks in this direction, but this remark applies to almost all the ditches that the "laughing women" dug for their defenders). A few fortifications were created without taking into account the possibility of using fire weapons and the interaction of military branches. However, there was no interaction. This is what the main and only line of defense looked like. Advice

79

Russian divisions were located in two echelons, but the second echelon had no equipped positions at all. And besides, the command of the 48th Army, in accordance with the directives of the Headquarters, all the previous days was preparing not for the defense of an advantageous natural line along the Shelonya Mshaga rivers, but for an offensive operation with the aim of defeating the enemy in the area of Solna, Dno .

On the night of August 19, two divisions of the 28th Corps of General Viktorin, having made their way through the forests and swamps, reached the Oredezh station, entering the rear of the Luga operational group. The defeated units of the 237th Rifle Division fled in panic, not accepting the battle.

South of Lake Ilmen, General Hansen's 10th Army Corps stormed Staraya Russa. According to the German historian Paul Karel, the fighting for the city broke out fiercely: "Young Leningrad workers, who had never been on the front line before, together with the shelled soldiers of the units of the Soviet 11th Army, put up stubborn resistance, repelling German attacks in hand-to-hand combat . Every meter of land was taken with a fight, everything was used - rifle butts, bayonets, shovels, pistols and flamethrowers. Soviet tanks dug into the ground, firing longitudinal fire from machine guns and heavy artillery shells, eventually forced the Germans to stop." Nevertheless, four days later, units of the 10th Corps took the city and went to the Lovat River, thereby covering the right flank of Army Group North.

In this situation, on August 12, Marshal Voroshilov carried out a surprise counterattack near Staraya Russa by the forces of the 11th Army and Major General K.M. Kachanova. The latter included the 245th, 254th, 257th, 262nd rifle, 25th and 54th cavalry divisions, the 264th and 644th corps artillery regiments, the 171st and 759th anti-tank artillery regiments, the 16th th and 59th armored trains. At the expense of the front, the army was further reinforced with the 181st Rifle Division, the 270th and 264th Corps Artillery Regiments, a division of rocket launchers and a separate tank battalion. Since the troops of the two Soviet

80

armies were opposed only by the 30th, 290th and 126th infantry divisions. vision, the offensive was initially successful. In three days, the 34th Army, with the support of long-range bombing and front-line aviation, advanced 60 km and, pushing the enemy's 10th Army Corps to Lake Ilmen, began to threaten the rear of the entire German Novgorod group. That, however, did not prevent the divisions of the 1st Army Corps from occupying Novgorod on August 15, and Chudovo on August 20, cutting off the railway linking Leningrad with Moscow. However, under the impression of Voroshilov's blower, Hitler ordered to immediately remove one motorized corps from the 3rd Panzer Group from the Moscow direction and transfer it to Army Group North, which plunged General Hoth into deep grief, who believed that "the corps was used on the wrong place where the outcome of operations was decided.

In the north, after four days of fierce fighting, the 1st Panzer Division managed to find a weak spot in the Soviet defense. Reinhardt sent the 6th Panzer and 1st Infantry Divisions into the gap that had formed. Göpner ordered the transfer of the 8th tank there. August 16

Soviet units left Kingisepp. The 1st and 8th tank divisions of the enemy moved to Krasnogvardeysk, and the 6th tank, 36th motorized and 1st infantry divisions reached the Leningrad-Narva highway. To avoid encirclement, General Pshennikov's 8th Army had to hurriedly leave the territory of Estonia and retreat to the Kopor plateau. The army's communications against strikes from the south were provided by the 281st rifle, 2nd division of the people's militia and cadets of the Novo-Peterhof border military-political school of the NKVD named after K.E. Voroshilov (out of 700 people of the cadet battalion, after a month and a half, 72 border guards survived, and they were handed lieutenant "kubari").

Sergeant S.I. wrote to Comrade Stalin about the state of affairs in the 8th Army from the hospital. Shilov:

"On the Estonian sector of the front, hostilities are taking place in a panic mood. Most of the commanders

81

runs away from the front line to the rear. The soldiers will look: there is no company commander and platoon commander, and they retreat in panic. The commanders of the companies and platoons will retreat from the front line of fire by 600-700 meters, and when the soldiers behind them rush to run and reach them, the commanders order the soldiers to go back, but the soldiers themselves do not lead forward. Platoon commanders at this time carry out mass executions of the fighters, and the enemy takes advantage of this moment ... Among the command there are disputes about who to lead the fighters on the attack, orders are delegated to higher authorities one by one, and the order reaches the junior commanders and fighters... The division was defeated due to the fact that communications with neighbors worked very poorly and could not maneuver to other positions in a timely manner. There are great turmoils between commanding officers, killings among themselves in disputes, and there are a number of cases when soldiers are shot who retreat in panic, seeing that their commanders are running away. A lot of outrages are still happening, about which you can't write everything, and all the blame falls on the fighters, i.e. as the proverb says - the switchman is to blame ... "

The watercraft of the Chudskaya flotilla, which found itself in isolation, were abandoned even earlier by the escaped teams and subsequently were actively exploited by the enemy for military transportation. In the official history of the fleet, this story is stated, of course, more heroically: "In connection with the withdrawal of Soviet troops to Leningrad, the ships of the Chudskaya flotilla were flooded by order of the command, and the crews fought their way to the area of the city of Narva." The counterattacks taken by units of the 8th Army and the Kingisepp Group with the aim of throwing the enemy away from the highway and the Leningrad-Narva railway line and the Krasnogvardeisk-Kingisepp railway did not give any results, except that the 4th DNO was surrounded.

By August 19, all three tank divisions of Reinhardt reached the Krasnogvardeisky UR, which managed to occupy parts of the 1st tank, 2nd and 3rd guards divisions of the people's militia, and after them - the 291st rifle division. Here, 150 ze were installed to fight tanks.

82

thread guns detached from the 2nd Air Defense Corps. Defensive battles began on the near approaches to the city. These days, a unique result was recorded, achieved by Senior Lieutenant 3.G. Kolobanov: at the Voiskovitsy state farm, on his KV, acting from an ambush, he knocked out 22 German tanks.

In the central sector, fighting with two enemy infantry divisions, the Astanin task force continued to hold the Luga line with open flanks - in fact, in a "bag", in which there were 45 thousand people, 97 serviceable tanks and 38 armored vehicles, 355 guns, 140 mortars and 930 machine guns. Having analyzed the current situation, the headquarters of the Northern Front on August 19 reported to the commander-in-chief: "The enemy, with forces of up to two divisions, holding down our grouping in the Luga direction, with the forces of five infantry divisions, two motorized divisions, two or three tank divisions, is developing an offensive to Krasnogvardeysk, Krasnoye Selo and from the Volosovo region to the Siverskaya station with the aim - in cooperation with the grouping in the area of the Batetskaya station - to encircle our Luzhskaya

grouping for further development of the offensive in the direction of Leningrad". Voroshilov considered these conclusions panicky and did not take any measures to regroup the troops.

The next day, Reinhardt cut the Luga Highway south of Krasnogvardeysk. Voroshilov and Zhdanov, not daring to ask Stalin for permission to leave Luga, continued to wait for everything to "dissolve" by itself - the enemy would finally run out of steam from day to day. It was only on the morning of August 22 that General Astanin received a directive to withdraw his DIVISIONS "to a line prepared in advance," while the troops of the group were ordered to destroy the Reinhardt corps south of Krasnogvardeysk as the immediate task! Having posted the rearguards, the commander led the group, renamed the South, along the railway to the north.

On August 24, the SS division occupied Luga.

83

To overcome the crisis south of Lake Ilmen, Field Marshal Leeb transferred the 3rd motorized division and the SS division "Dead Head" to Staraya Russa from the Luga and from the Novgorod direction, uniting them under the command of General Manstein and his headquarters. The headquarters of the 50th army corps of General Georg Lindemann arrived from Smolensk to replace the 56th motorized corps in the Luga area, uniting the 269th SS infantry and police divisions. At the same time, the German command hastily transferred through Vilnius to the old Russian direction the 39th motorized corps of General Schmidt, consisting of the 12th tank (96 tanks), 18th and 20th motorized divisions.

From 19 to 22 August, two motorized divisions of Manstein suddenly hit the open flank and rear of General Kachanov's army and, in cooperation with Hansen's infantry divisions, utterly defeated the Soviet troops, driving them back across the Lovat River. Moreover, the 34th Army actually fled from the battlefield, having lost about 60% of its personnel and over 80% of military equipment by August 25, some of the formations were surrounded. The "puffy" Manstein reports that his corps alone captured 12,000 prisoners, [14] a tank, 246 guns, and a particularly valuable trophy—a secret rocket launcher. General Sobennikov for the failure of the operation, the loss of Novgorod and poor command and control of the troops was immediately removed from the post of front commander. His place was taken by Lieutenant General P.A. Kurochkin.

Sobennikov was first given an army, and then he was completely relieved of his post. In October, a criminal case was opened against him and he was sentenced to five years in prison. The Presidium of the Supreme Council pardoned him and sent him to the front, depriving him of his general rank and awards. He fought as deputy commander of the army and again rose to the rank of general.

Commander-34, Major General K.M. Kachanov, who "served in the Red Army from the day it was organized", the former Chief Soviet Advisor in Republican Spain, was much less fortunate. In September, after

84

how his army failed to implement yet another fantastic plan of the Headquarters and was again encircled, by order of the army commissar of the 1st rank L.3 authorized by the GKO. Mekhlis, he was arrested and soon shot by the verdict of the Military Tribunal of the North-Western Front "for unauthorized leaving the battlefield."

On August 20, with the aim of "special organization of the working community," the Military Council of the Defense of Leningrad was formed, consisting of L.M. Antyufeeva, Ya.F. Kapustina, A.A. Kuznetsova, P.S. Popkov and A.I. Saturday. After a tough conversation with Stalin, who accused the military-political leadership of the city of political myopia, amateurism and irresponsibility, Zhdanov and Voroshilov joined the Defense Council. This neoplasm lasted only ten days. The most outstanding document born in the bowels of this organization was the resolution on the formation of 150 militia battalions for street fighting, 600 people each "from among the working people", including

as well as women and teenagers. The battalions were supposed to be armed with rifles, hunting rifles, bottles of combustible mixture, sabers, daggers and pikes, which the workers themselves had to produce in excess of the planned output.

In the same days, at a meeting of city party activists, Voroshilov declared: "We have a lot of artillery. We will not only not let the enemy into Leningrad, but we will split it here. Leningrad will be his grave."

In order to improve command and control of troops in the North-Western direction, on August 23, the State Defense Committee decided to divide the Northern Front into Leningrad, under the command of Lieutenant General M.M. Popov, and Karelsky, which was headed by Lieutenant General V.A. Frolov.

On August 26, a commission of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (6) and the GKO, consisting of V.M., arrived in Leningrad. Molotov, G.M. Malenkova, N.G. Kuznetsova, A.N. Kosygin, P.F. Zhigarev and N.N. Voronova.

85

The mandate given to her allowed, on behalf of the State Defense Committee, to resolve all issues of city defense and the evacuation of enterprises and the population. The commission, after working for ten days, adopted a number of important decisions, most of which remained on paper due to the rapidly changing situation.

On August 25, the enemy, having concentrated units of the 1st and 28th army and 39th motorized corps in the area of Chudovo, Kremeno, easily scattered the defenses of the 48th army (which, after all the chaotic and unorganized counterattacks, randomly turned into in essence, into an incomplete and incapable division), threw back the Soviet units to the north and began to rapidly develop the offensive along the railway and the Moscow-Leningrad highway. Already by 15.00 the Germans captured Luban. From here, the 12th Panzer, 121st and 122nd Infantry Divisions, without meeting resistance, moved to Tosno, the 20th Motorized Division acted in the direction of the Mga station, the 18th Motorized Division - to Kirishi. The next day, Stalin allowed the Leningrad Front to keep the four-day tank production of the Leningrad factories, demanded that they mine the Moscow Highway and at the same time "at any cost and by any means" to clear Lyuban and Chudovo of the enemy. At the end of the conversation, increasingly doubting the ability of the commander-in-chief of the direction to understand the situation, the Supreme Commander asked General Popov: "Answer briefly, is Klim helping or hindering?" And Klimbatyr, the brave hero of the war (this is not me, this is the Kazakh akyn Dzhambul, he also received a wonderful compliment to Stalin - a lucky bearer) simply did not believe that the enemy could come to Leningrad from the east.

On August 28, the Germans captured Tosno and Sablino, units of the 4th Panzer Group connected with the troops of the 16th Army near the Sluditsy station, closing the ring around the Southern Group of Forces. General Astanin, who had unsuccessfully tried to break through the German barriers for the third day, read with bewilderment the new combat order of the front headquarters, written in the spirit of commissar appeals

86

times of the Civil War: "The enemy, having occupied small parts of Kuznenovo, Bekovo, the village of Divensky, Novinka, creates the appearance of encirclement of your group of troops. We are sure that the impudence and arrogance of the presumptuous enemy will not impress the fighters and commanders of the units of the Luga group and its glorious leaders, who honorably fulfilled their duty to the Motherland near Luga. We are also confident that the task of regrouping the troops will be carried out swiftly and with honor. On August 28, 1941, I order to crush the enemy in the area of Ostrov, Bekovo, Kuznetsovo and advance in the area of Siverskaya, Vyra.

On August 29, the impudent enemy captured Kirishi and came close to Kolpino, on the 30th he reached the Neva in the Ivanovsky region. There were only a few kilometers to Leningrad.

In a telegram sent to Molotov and Malenkov, Stalin could not hide his irritation:

"We have just been informed that Tosno has been taken by the enemy. If this continues, I'm afraid that Leningrad will be surrendered idiotically stupid, and all the Leningrad divisions are at risk of being captured. What are Popov and Voroshilov doing?.. Where do they get such an abyss of passivity and purely rustic resignation to fate? What kind of people - I do not understand. In Leningrad there are now many KV tanks, a lot of aviation, eres ... Why is the rich Leningrad technology not used in this decisive sector? Don't you think that someone is deliberately opening the way for the Germans in this decisive sector? What kind of person is Popov? What, in fact, is Voroshilov busy with and how is his assistance to Leningrad expressed? I am writing about this because I am very alarmed by the incomprehensible inaction of the Leningrad command."

On August 31, the motorized units of the enemy captured Mga, where the last two railways connecting Leningrad with the country converged, and, having reached the Neva, moved along the eastern bank of the river to Shlisselburg. They were not expected here, there were no defensive structures, no regular troops in this sector.

87

The way for the Germans was blocked by the NKVD Colonel S.I. Donskoy (6,000 men), reinforced by two tank companies, and a mountain rifle brigade (800 men). On August 31, the 4th division of the people's militia, which had barely emerged from the encirclement, was thrown at the line of the Tosna River. To the south of Kolpino, the working battalion of the Izhora plant and the 84th separate tank battalion (21 KV tanks and 15 T-50 vehicles) advanced. On the same day, the 4th DNO received a combat order: <... concentrate on the northern outskirts of Kolpino, st. Pontoon with the task of advancing in order to destroy the opposing enemy and capture Ivanovskoye, Pokrovskoye by the end of 08/31/41. From Slutsk, the 168th Rifle Division of Colonel A.L. Bondarev (7,000 fighters and commanders), which entered into an oncoming battle with the 121st infantry division of the enemy. At the same time, parts of the 90th Infantry Division, Colonel A.A. Darina made an attempt to break through the Siverskaya to connect with the Southern Group of Forces.

° They attacked again, fulfilling the leader's demand to free Chudovo and Lyuban. At the same time, the Lenfront command is well aware that the "presumptuous enemy" does not have any numerical superiority, "acts with insignificant forces on areas that are divided among themselves and do not have tactical elbow interaction", its communications are stretched, which means that it is possible and necessary to beat him in parts. But in practice, for some reason, the red commanders do not succeed. The German REGIMENTS "impudently and impudently" continue to overthrow the Soviet divisions and armies. And this is not an exaggeration, but literal feeds from reports and orders: "The enemy, up to an infantry regiment with armored vehicles and artillery, having thrown back parts of the 45th Army in the northeast direction, captured the Sologubovka area", the encircled Astanin group continues "stubborn battles with by the enemy by force to an infantry regiment with tanks blocking the exit of the troops of the group in the whole

88

in the right direction", near Tosno and Mgoy, one regiment of the same 121st Infantry divisions.

On August 31, after consulting with Göpner, von Leeb decided, in view of the lack of forces, to stop the advance of mobile units towards Leningrad and wait a few days until the infantry divisions approached.

New changes took place in the leadership of the Soviet troops. On August 29, by the decision of the State Defense Committee, the High Command of the North-West direction was abolished. Its field administration was united with the Leningrad Front, and the North-Western Front was subordinate to the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command. It was believed that this would allow the command of the Leningrad Front to concentrate its efforts on

solution of the main task - the defense of Leningrad. On August 30, the GKO liquidated the Defense Council of Leningrad, transferring its functions to the Military Council of the Front.

Simultaneously, urgent measures were taken to strengthen the grouping of troops in the Leningrad direction. The Slutsk-Kolpinsky sector of the Krasnogvardeisky fortified area became an independent fortified area; the troops operating here were united in the 55th Army of Major General I.G. Lazarev (70th, 90th, 168th and 237th rifle divisions, 1st and 4th divisions of the people's militia, 2nd rifle regiment). The remaining formations of the Krasnogvardeisky UR were brought into the 42nd Army by Major General V.I. Shcherbakov (291st Rifle Division, which soon departed for the Karelian Isthmus, 2nd and 3rd Guards Militia Divisions, 6th Marine Brigade). The Military Council of the 48th Army was ordered to fully equip the remaining 21st Tank, 311th, 128th Rifle Divisions and the 1st Mountain Rifle Brigade with marching battalions and weapons (together, on September 1, they totaled 5838 people, armed with 7 guns, 16 mortars, 46 machine guns and 20 hand grenades), take the NKVD division under their control, recapture the Mga station and push the enemy to the south. 8th Army (11th, 48th, 118th, 125th, 191st, 268th Rifle Divisions)

89

continued to retreat to the line passing along the river Voronka, Teshkovo, Slobodka, Kipen. The remaining ownerless 281st Infantry, 1st Guards DNO, 2nd Division of the People's Militia and the 5th Marine Brigade were also transferred to its composition.

Following this, the commanders were reshuffled: on September 1, Major General V.I. Shcherbakov moved from the post of commander of the 42nd Army to the commander of the 8th Army, and the former commander of the 8th Army, Lieutenant General F.S., was appointed in his place. Ivanov. It was also decided to form the 6th and 7th divisions of the people's militia and the 20th rifle division of the NKVD.

Two new armies were deployed on the eastern bank of the Volkhov River - the 54th (285th, 286th, 310th and 314th rifle, 27th cavalry divisions, [22nd tank brigade, 119th separate tank battalion, 881, 882, 883rd corps artillery regiments), under the command of Marshal G.I. Kulik and the 52nd (267th, 288th, 292nd, 310th, 312th, 294th and 316th rifle divisions) Lieutenant General N.K. Klykov. Kulik was given the task of completing the formation within three days, concentrating and going over to the offensive on Mga, Pogostye and Saltsy. Taking care of the economy, the marshal, to his surprise, found two inactive air divisions in the Tikhvin area, about which he informed Moscow. On September 4, an interesting conversation took place between the Leningrad inmates and the Supreme Commander-in-Chief:

STALIN: There are two air divisions in Tikhvin - the 39th and the 2nd, both are at your disposal, but they do not receive orders from you. What's the matter, don't you really need aviation?

VOROSHILOV, ZHDANOV: This is unexpected and pleasant news for us... Nobody informed us about the divisions in Tikhvin. Orders will be given today.

STALIN: You misunderstood us. Both of these air divisions are your old divisions. Your front simply does not know or has forgotten about their existence ... You simply do not know or did not know, and now you will learn from us that your two divisions are sitting in the Tikhvin region, and not in Tikhvin itself,

90

who have not yet received assignments. Kulik found these divisions."

On September 5, Marshal Voroshilov took command of the Leningrad Front, and General M.M. Popov became chief of staff of the front. Almost immediately, Kliment Efremovich asked to be relieved of his post and appointed "someone younger."

On the night of September 4, Finnish troops began to break through the Soviet defenses on the Tuloksa River. On the evening of September 5, they took the city of Olonets, covering almost 30 km in two days. On September 7, the 1st Jaeger Brigade reached the Svir River in the area of Lodeynoye Pole. Parts of the 67th and 314th divisions took up defensive positions along the southern bank of the river. The Finns managed to cross the river and seize the bridgehead of the pgorina up to 100 km and up to 20 km in depth. They had 125 km to go to Tikhvin.

Meretskov lists the shortcomings in the actions of the Soviet troops: "Thus, initially the command of the 7th Army, organizing the defense, sought to distribute the available forces and means evenly across all sectors. This gave the enemy the opportunity, by concentrating reserves in the right place and temporarily weakening other zones, to use his material and numerical advantage to break through the defenses in the most important directions. We paid insufficient attention to ensuring the joints between formations and their flanks. Meanwhile, the enemy almost never launched a frontal attack, but, as a rule, used detour maneuvers and carried out encirclement operations. This circumstance took on special significance in wooded and swampy areas. Finally, life (!!) has shown that when defending on a broad front with full-echelon formation of troops, it is necessary to have significant reserves. It is expedient to place them somewhat closer to the front line than under normal conditions, mainly near communication junctions, in settlements, near convenient routes, and preferably not in one place. Here are the conclusions that I made for myself from the battles at Svir.

91

These are the discoveries that the five-star general made for himself, who before the war commanded armies and districts, gave some advice to the Republicans in Spain, and held the post of Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army. Sad.

On September 8, the 424th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 20th Motorized Division, overcame the Sinyavin Heights and captured Shlisselburg. The Donskoy division, despite the fire support of the cruiser Maxim Gorky and the destroyers Strogii and Stroyny, had lost more than 4,000 men by that time, and its remnants crossed to the right bank of the river. Only the island on which the Shlisselburg fortress rises was in the hands of the Soviet garrison for almost 500 days. For the two red marshals, the fall of Shlisselburg was a complete surprise: from the maps and reports of the headquarters it followed that our troops were advancing in this area, "everything is going well", and the 48th Army was about to destroy the enemy and liberate Mga.

"People lie, deceive each other," Kulik complained to Voroshilov. "On paper, everything is fine, but on the cards there are crowns ... Therefore, the capture of Shlisselburg must be attributed to the general lies and ignorance of the affairs of the highest authorities, how things are on the spot."

With the Germans reaching Lake Ladoga and the upper reaches of the Neva, Leningrad found itself tightly blocked by enemy troops. The city was cut off from all its hydroelectric power plants. The possibility of leaving part of the ships of the Baltic Fleet through Lake Ladoga was excluded. However, the fact of the blockade of the city did not immediately become known to the Soviet people. Even on September 12, at a regular press conference for foreign journalists, Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs A. Lozovsky confidently stated:

"... The assertion of the Germans that they managed to cut off all the railways connecting Leningrad with the Soviet Union is an exaggeration common to the German command." The country learned about the blockade of the city only at the beginning of 1942, when mass evacuation began from it.
population.

92

Here is an entry from the diary of a Leningrader: "Our people are long-suffering! What is being done on the fronts, even near Leningrad, we do not know. We don't know anything! We are cattle. We are the dust with which do not count"

Enemy attempts to capitalize on success, to cross the Neva on the move and connect with the Finnish troops on the Karelian Isthmus, were repulsed by units of the 1st NKVD division deployed on the right bank of the river and the 115th rifle division of Major General V. F. Konkova with the 107th tank battalion attached to it. Soon they were joined by the 10th rifle and 4th separate marine brigades. In addition, the 48th Army, which was headed by Lieutenant General M.A. Antonyuk, the 286th Rifle Division from the Headquarters reserve entered. |

The advance of the Germans from Sinyavino to the east was stopped by the 54th Army at the line of Lipki - Settlement No. 8 - Gaitolovo.

The patience of Stalin, who learned about the surrender of Shlisselburg from a foreign radio broadcast, completely gone:

"We are outraged by your behavior, which is expressed in the fact that you inform us only about the loss of this or that area by us, but usually you do not say a word about what measures you have taken in order to finally stop losing cities and stations. Just as ugly you reported the loss of Shlisselburg. Perhaps you have already decided to surrender Leningrad?! Where did the KV tanks go? Where did you place them? Why is there no improvement at the front, despite such an abundance of KV tanks as you have? After all, not a single front has the same amount of HF as yours. What is your aviation doing? Why does she not support the actions of our troops?.."

As early as September 4, the Germans fired at Leningrad for the first time from 240-mm guns brought up in the area of Tosno station. On September 6, German aviation, in two groups of 30 aircraft, made the first massive raid on the city.

93

Leningrad anti-aircraft gunners were excellently equipped and at different times were armed with from 700 to 950 guns, up to 150 heavy machine guns, not counting the air defense forces of the fleet and anti-aircraft artillery of ships. General N.P. Milchenko - at that time a lieutenant and battery commander - could not get enough of his favorite 85-mm gun: "And not only because we thoroughly studied these guns back in school. They were simply excellent guns with high combat properties, capable of hitting suddenly appearing air targets. Moreover, the design features of the gun, the presence of a sufficiently effective remote grenade and armor-piercing projectile made it possible, if necessary, to use it also for firing at airborne troops, ground targets, including firing points and enemy tanks. Even at the school, we admired the excellent tactical and technical data of the 85-millimeter gun. The work of the artillerymen was provided by two searchlight regiments, an VNOS regiment, sound-measuring stations and installations. radio detection RUS-1. Groups of barrage balloons covered the immediate approaches to the city and the most important objects. Nevertheless, despite the intense barrage of anti-aircraft artillery, the German pilots managed to break through to the center of Leningrad and drop a large number of incendiary bombs. As a result, there were about 180 fires. The biggest raged in the food warehouses named after A.E. Badaev. A significant amount of grain, flour, and sugar perished, mainly due to the failure to carry out elementary measures to organize air defense.

The first bombardments made a depressing impression on the population. "And we were told all the time that Leningrad was inaccessible, that there would be no raids," Elena Skryabina wrote. - That's unavailable! Air defense turned out to be a soap bubble. A guarantee of security is an empty phrase... The destruction of the Badaev warehouses threatens with imminent famine."

The VNOS services did not ensure the timely rise of fighter aircraft and its guidance on targets. Some sectors turned out to be completely uncovered, or individual commanders did not know their sectors and freely let enemy aircraft through. Soviet fighters flew into restricted areas and came under fire from their own artillery. It was impossible to control them from the ground due to the lack of on-board radios. Anti-aircraft gunners could not

to distinguish planes by their silhouettes and fired recklessly at everything that was flying. So, for example, in August, long-range TB-7 bombers from Vodopyanov's division, which had started from the airfield in Pushkino towards Berlin, were shot down.

Before the war, they did not learn to identify their aviation for reasons of secrecy, the German one because of friendship with Hitler: "... by the time Nazi Germany attacked our country, the regiment and the corps, unfortunately, did not have the material support necessary for this, there were no manuals for the study of German aircraft. And all because, as we were told, in the pre-war period it was centrally forbidden to publish literature and manuals about the Armed Forces of Germany ... When the war began, we began to teach scouts-observers in a handicraft way, as best we could. All German equipment in the Soviet design bureaus has long been dismantled to the screw, carefully studied and copied in many "domestic developments", but the Red Army did not even have pictures depicting enemy tanks and aircraft!

However, the last problem was solved rather quickly; In extreme situations, Russians have always been able to show ingenuity, finding simple and original solutions that never occurred to them in peacetime. The Leningrad innovators, since they had their own optical and mechanical plant, launched the production of binoculars, in the right eyepiece of which the exact silhouettes of enemy aircraft were engraved. It was more difficult to establish a clear organization and interaction of anti-aircraft

95

artillery with fighter aircraft. It took almost three more months. But even in early December, the order to dismiss the commander and commissar of the corps from their positions stated: "The air defense troops are poorly coping with their task of defending Leningrad, the enemy often bombs the city with impunity.",

From September 8, 1941, communication with Leningrad could only be maintained through Lake Ladoga and by air. This made it extremely difficult to organize the defense. The available routes did not provide the supply of the necessary material and technical means both for the population of the city and for the troops defending it.

The forces of Army Group North were also exhausted. However, the morale of the troops was high, the cherished goal seemed to be at arm's length and it was possible to scrub the buttons on the uniforms on the eve of parade on Nevsky Prospekt. Having closed the Kolgo blockade around Leningrad, the Hitlerite Headquarters considered his fate practically a foregone conclusion. At a meeting of the highest generals on September 5, it was concluded that Field Marshal Leeb would need 6-7 divisions to end the hostilities near Leningrad and join the Finnish troops. The confidence of the Germans in the capture of Leningrad was so great that they appointed in advance the commander of the 50th Army Corps, General Lindemann, as the commandant of the city and printed special passes for cars to travel around the city. The commander of the Sever group, who turned 65 that day, received congratulations from the Fuhrer and 250,000 marks as a gift.

Chapter 4

STORM OF LENINGRAD (September 9-25, 1941)

On September 6, Hitler signed Directive No. 35. In it, the command of Army Group North was proposed, together with the troops of the South-Eastern Finnish Army, to completely complete the encirclement of Leningrad and, limiting the blockade of the city, to transfer mobile formations to the army group no later than September 15 "Center". The same directive ordered von Richthofen's 8th Air Corps to relocate from Estonia to the south to reinforce Field Marshal von Bock's army group. Less than 300 aircraft remained at Leeb's disposal, including transport and communications aircraft (so far, there were 468 combat vehicles against 420 for the Leningraders). Hitler had declared that in the northwest "the goal had been achieved" and now he was in a hurry to take

Moscow is the main strategic goal. Leningrad was turning "into a secondary theater of operations."

With this in mind, von Leeb on September 9, after a powerful artillery and aviation preparation, began a direct assault on the city. A smooth attack from the south on the center of the Soviet defensive lines was delivered by the Reinhardt Corps with the forces of the 1st and 6th Panzer and 36th Motorized Divisions. The SS police division and the 269th Infantry Division advanced on Krasnogvardeysk along the highway from Luga. On the left flank, from Ropsha to Kernovo, the 1st, 58th, and 291st Infantry Divisions of the 18th Army deployed; on the right, south of Kolpino, are the shock forces of the 16th Army: 121, 9, and 122nd Infantry Divisions. To heaven

97

One Shlisselburg along the southern tip of Lake Ladoga was operated by the 20th Motorized Division of Major General Zorn and a regiment of the 126th Infantry Division. Thus, 11 enemy divisions took part directly in the attack on Leningrad. They were opposed by the forces of the 42nd and 55th armies, the left flank of the 8th army. Behind enemy lines, the divisions of the Southern Group of Astana with a total strength of 25 thousand people with the last six tanks, exhausted by many days of foot crossing through forests and swamps, continuous battles and bombing, having almost no fuel, ammunition and food, still tried to break through Vyritsa and Mina to connect with the main forces of the front. Left near Luga as a cover force, the 235th Rifle Division and the militia regiment had already ceased to exist by that time. From the talks between Moscow and Leningrad, one gets the impression that the Astana residents were "breaking through" in a somewhat strange way – by storming settlements. In the north, they were opposed by units of the 8th Panzer Division, from the south they were propped up by the 285th Security Division.

The Germans, acting as mobile assault troupes, had to literally gnaw through the defense step by step.

"Both panzer divisions," writes A. Clark, "soon got stuck in a network of anti-tank ditches and scattered field fortifications built by construction battalions and militia. These fortifications were often poorly located and poorly executed, but there were many of them... It is in this kind of action - in close combat - that typical Russian qualities, such as courage, perseverance, ingenuity in the use of camouflage and ambushes, are more than compensated for those shortcomings in leadership and materiel, which led to huge losses in open areas on the border and in Luga. German tanks, on the other hand, suffered, like all armored forces that ran into close defenses. The tankers suffered heavy casualties as their commanders struggled to adjust to the unfamiliar

98

environment. On the very first day of the offensive, four commanders of the 6th Panzer Division were killed.

Field Marshal Leeb noted the same thing in his diary:

"In the course of today's offensive of the 4th Panzer Group of the 38th Corps, heavy fighting broke out. From everything it is clear that the enemy has a clear intention to hold with all his might the outer belt of defense, which in some places managed to break through the units of the 36th motorized and 1st infantry di VISION.

By the evening of September 10, in the sector of the 3rd Guards People's Militia Division, the enemy managed to advance 3 km towards Krasnoye Selo. The command of the Leningrad Front, which considered the offensive of the 41st motorized and 38th army corps a distraction, reinforced the 42nd army with the 1st tank division, the 500th rifle regiment, the 1st marine brigade and two tank battalions. General Ivanov received an order to personally arrive at the front line, organize a counteroffensive during the night and destroy the enemy group that had broken through with "concentric strikes". Rear

a fortified position on the Pulkovo Heights was to be taken by the newly formed 5th division of the people's militia.

On the same day, the 8th Soviet Army went on the offensive with all its might, inflicting the main blow on Gostilitsy. However, she was not successful, and her 118th rifle division, which managed to move forward 3-5 km, was cut off by the Germans south of Mikhailovsky.

"Concentric strikes" never took place. On the morning of September 11, General Reinhardt broke through the positions on the right flank of the 2nd Guards DNO and captured Duderhof by the end of the day. On September 12, the 58th Infantry Division of General Hoynert broke into Krasnoye Selo, units of the 1st Panzer Division captured the village of Bolshoe Vittolovo and reached the approaches to Pulkovo. At the same time, the 6th Tank Army bypassed Krasnogvardeisk, which fell the next day. Together with him, two regiments of the 2nd Guards DNO Colonel V.A. were killed. Trubachev.

99

Battalions of the 96th and 121st Infantry Divisions broke into Slutsk. The commanders and commissars of the 90th and 237th rifle divisions marched towards the tribunal.

The front line came close to Leningrad. One by one, powerful artillery and air strikes fell on the city. The German noose was gradually and, it seemed, inexorably compressed.

However, the headquarters of the OKH saw more and more clearly that bloody battles were unfolding in the theater of operations, from where they expected to take reinforcements. General Halder informed Leeb that the city "should not be taken, but only surrounded. The offensive must not go beyond the Peterhof-Pushkin highway. On September 12, Hitler issued a new directive, which ordered not to withdraw air and armored forces until the complete encirclement of Leningrad was carried out. Therefore, the date indicated in Directive No. 35 for redeployment "may be moved by a few days." In fact, Leeb had only three extra days,

and he hastened to use them.

In desperation, the commander of Army Group North, who considered the capture of Leningrad a worthy crown of his military career, wrote in his diary:

"The overall development of the offensive can be assessed as exceptionally favorable... The 36th motorized, 1st tank and 58th infantry divisions have advanced very well. Instructions from the High Command of the Ground Forces: to begin the withdrawal of tanks from September 15!.. The 1st Panzer and 36th Motorized Divisions advanced to a great depth, reaching the Detskoe Selo-Peterhof highway. But this success cannot be exploited, as the divisions will have to be given up. They will not participate in the further advance to Leningrad. Through the heads of his superiors, the field marshal turned to the Führer's adjutant, Colonel Schmundt, with a request to leave an armored fist at his disposal, because the withdrawal of mobile units at such a moment "is equal to a lost battle."

100

In the meantime, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks decided to respect the request of the "first red marshal" and appoint General of the Army G.K. Zhukov, who arrived from Moscow on the morning of September 13, in the midst of the German assault. Generals M.S. arrived with him. Khozin (new chief of staff), I.I. Fedyuninsky, N.I. Kokorev. Without delving into the situation, Georgy Konstantinovich first of all announced that the enemy "should not only be beaten, but also possible without much effort", you just need to "act more assertively". But already at three o'clock in the morning, having received the news of the loss of Krasnogvardeysk, Zhukov reported that the situation in Leningrad was "significantly more complicated than it seemed to the General Staff."

- How so? Marshal B.M. was surprised from Moscow. Shaposhnikov. - It turns out that it was as if the Krasnogvardeysky UR did not exist.

"It's very simple," Zhukov explained, "at the Krasnogvardeisky UR, the ur units and the guard units did not seriously fight, because the enemy, breaking through the copses, bypassed the units from the flank and rear, and under the influence of the enemy's bypass, the 3rd division completely fled. The 2nd division fled partially. And the enemy rushed into this gaping hole. Units of the 42nd Army are fighting exceptionally badly, and, apparently, there was no real struggle and reprisals against cowards and alarmists in this army. I think that in the coming days we will put things in order and make them fight like
relies.

The next day the Military Council of the front. with the participation of the commander of the Baltic Fleet, he discussed the situation and, in order to strengthen the defense of the city, determined additional measures that were taken urgently. The command had at its disposal the 8th, 42nd, 55th and 23rd armies, in which there were 30 rifle divisions (together with the people's militia divisions, which officially became rifle divisions on September 23), 6 separate marine brigades, all industrial and human

101

sky resources of a huge city. The field administration of the 48th Army was disbanded, its troops were transferred to Kulik. During the week, it was planned to form two more rifle divisions and five rifle brigades, creating four defensive lines. Anti-tank defense in the most dangerous areas was strengthened by anti-aircraft guns, the fire of all naval artillery was concentrated in the zone of the 42nd Army from Uritsk to the Pulkovo Heights, part of the forces of the 23rd Army from the Karelian Isthmus was transferred to the Uritsk area, new formations were formed from sailors, students of Leningrad military educational institutions.

On September 15, Zhukov dismissed the commander of the 42nd Army, General Ivanov, "as incapable of leading the army," appointing Major General I.I. Fedyuninsky. The new army commander first of all made sure that he actually did not have an army, as well as a headquarters, intelligence, communications and supply services; there is an armed uncontrollable mass: "First of all, it was necessary to restore command and control of the troops, accurately determine the position of units and formations, the degree of their combat capability, their ability to resist, find out which areas are the most threatened and require immediate reinforcement. Further, it was necessary to take into account all the reserves, provide for the possibility and options for their use, take care of providing the troops with a sufficient amount of ammunition and engineering equipment, which is extremely necessary in defense.

The front was reinforced by the 21st NKVD Rifle Division, the 5th and 7th People's Militia Divisions, the 10th Red Banner and 11th Rifle Divisions, and two rifle brigades manned by sailors and personnel of air defense units. These formations formed the second echelon of defense, however, it soon became the first.

The fighting on the near approaches became more and more fierce.

German attempts to break through the Neva, as well as to advance along the Moscow-Leningrad highway and master

102

Kolpino were repulsed. In connection with the intentions of the enemy to establish a crossing across the Neva in the section Nevskaya Dubrovka - Moskovsky Dubrovka, Zhukov in his memoirs told a touching story about how "ahead of the German units were placed Soviet women, children and the elderly, driven from the nearest settlements. points. In order not to hurt our people, it was necessary to especially clearly conduct mortar and artillery fire at the enemy, who was in the depths of his battle formations.

All this is true, except for Zhukovsky's belated compassion. Georgy Konstantinovich did not suffer from intellectual complexes, but strictly adhered to the instructions of Comrade Stalin in this matter:

"They say that the German bastards, marching on Leningrad, send ahead of their troops delegates from the areas they occupied - old men, old women, women and children - with a request to the Bolsheviks to surrender Leningrad and establish peace.

It is said that among the Leningrad Bolsheviks there were people who do not consider it possible to use weapons against such delegates. I believe that if there are such people among the Bolsheviks, then they must be destroyed in the first place, because they are more dangerous than the German fascists.

My answer: do not be sentimental, but beat the enemy and his accomplices, voluntary or involuntary, in the teeth. War is relentless, and it brings defeat first of all to those who have shown weakness and vacillation. If anyone in our ranks vacillates, he will be the main culprit in the fall of Leningrad.

Hit with might and main on the Germans and on their delegates, whoever they may be, bone the enemies, it doesn't matter whether they are voluntary or involuntary enemies. No mercy for the German scoundrels or their delegates, whoever they may be."

By and large, the Kremlin and Smolensk leaders wanted to spit on all these "old men and old women", there was still no benefit from them, only extra mouths. Therefore, it is difficult to imagine Zhukov as displaying humanism and risking being enlisted as "enemy accomplices". In fact, Zhukov, Zhdanov, Kuznetsov and Merkulov did not

103

only without delay brought the order to the attention of all personnel, but also supplemented it with the requirement to "immediately open fire on all persons approaching the front line and prevent them from approaching our positions", without looking at who is "approaching" there, women or children who turned out to be "more dangerous for the Bolsheviks than the German fascists."

The new commander of the Leningrad Front outlined his city defense strategy as follows: "It was necessary, at the slightest opportunity, to counterattack the enemy day and night, exhaust and inflict losses on him in manpower and equipment, disrupt his offensive measures ... Counterattacks and counterattacks forced the enemy to - tivnika attack in slow motion. Already on September 14, Zhukov reported to Marshal B.M. Shaposhnikov that "organizes a strike" on the front of the 8th Army and plans to "go on the offensive" of the 55th and 42nd armies. Every day the Soviet DIVISIONS "delivered counterattacks", "liquidated", "restored the situation", attacked, attacked, attacked, advancing on their own corpses, hiding with their own corpses and filling up the enemy with their corpses.

A little later, near Vyazma and Rzhev, the soldiers gave this method of warfare their own definition - "Zhukov's three-row."

The Germans did not have 180-mm and 120-mm stationary batteries to overcome the 800-meter expanse of the Neva under the guns of Soviet warships and the 180-mm and 120-mm stationary batteries installed on the right bank chances.

At the Tosno line, the 4th division of the people's militia, Colonel P.I. Radygina continuously, with individual regiments, unsuccessfully tried to cross the river and recapture the settlements of Ust-Tosno, Ivanovskoye, Pokrovskoye on the right bank from the enemy. There was practically no artillery in the division. More or less serious fire support was provided by railway batteries and a destroyer, which took up a position at the mouth of the Neva, but they fired at the squares, and their fire was not corrected. On September 4, the 3rd Rifle Regiment was ordered to cross Tosna and

104

take the village of Pokrovskoye. At the beginning of the operation, the regiment suffered significant losses and, under enemy fire, lay down in front of the river. The officers, under heavy fire, managed to raise the regiment on the attack, cross the river and take Pokrovskoye with a fight. There was nothing to develop success. Fierce battles for

the settlement lasted four days. The Soviet regiment, which did not receive support, was cut off by the enemy from the coast and completely destroyed, led by the regiment commander Chugunov. On September 11, Colonel Radygin, who refused to obey the order of N.V. Solovyov, who took it into his head to organize a small victorious offensive in his personal presence, was removed from command of the division and demoted to the rank and file. There was another "disciplinary practice": in case of failure, the regiment commander was held accountable "for the grave condition of the regiment and heavy losses in battle."

As a result, the 4th division of the people's militia, having not completed a single task, was thrown back behind the line of an anti-tank ditch stretching from the Neva to the Moscow highway. The ditch, which had a width of 8 m and a depth of 3 m, as usual, was not defended by our units, and the battalions of the 122nd Infantry Division firmly settled in it. The Germans, who had the commendable habit of entrenching themselves at every occupied line, immediately began to develop a network of communication passages, machine-gun pillboxes and minefields.

The militias, who had practically lost their combat effectiveness, lay down in a swamp 100 meters from the ditch. Retired Major General L.V. Yakovlev described the state of the "defense" when he took command of one of the regiments of the 4th DNO: "The front line of defense passed in a damp peat bog. The fighters lay on the surface of the swamp, and their only cover was moss and bushes shorter than a man. The regiment was forced to defend itself in these difficult conditions, since the walls of Leningrad supported it from behind. Under such conditions, it was difficult to maintain the combat capability of the unit. On the right, under the same conditions, the 330th Rifle Regiment was defending; on the left, in drier terrain,

105

held the defense of the 284th joint venture. Reception and surrender of the regiment took place in a matter of minutes. The old regiment commander, who was in a depressed state, hardly reported the situation in the defended area. After the battles, the regiment suffered heavy losses in personnel and weapons, and the defense it occupied did not have any engineering shelters. The condition of the regiment was difficult, the people were exhausted and were in complete apathy and depression. Captain Smorodkin and I went around the regiment's defense area and everywhere we ran into groups of soldiers lying on wet peat and not reacting in any way to being addressed to them ... People have not washed since the beginning of the war.

The army of Fedyuninsky, with varying success, fought for Uritsk and Volodarsky, several times passing from hand to hand. The 8th army of General Shcherbakov had the task of "delivering blows to the enemy in the flank and rear" and delivered them, regardless of losses.

The southern group, on the advice of Marshal Shaposhnikov, on September 14 was ordered to stop the "exhausting battle for the capture of Vyritsa", and go around it from the east and along the Susanino-Pushkino railway to go to the location

"Nie of the 55th Army. Poorly imagining the state of Astana's troops and assuming to use them in the counteroffensive planned for September 17, the front command demanded: "All horse-drawn artillery, mortars, machine guns and horse carts should be withdrawn. Everything that cannot be brought out must be buried and carefully disguised." By this time, the group had already been dismembered by the enemy and disintegrated into separate uncontrollable parts. Horse carts existed only in Zhukov's imagination. There were 36 guns without shells, which the gunners pulled out on themselves.

The next day, the Southern Group as a whole ceased to exist. The 90th Rifle Division, which had been rushing towards it for two weeks, was driven out by the Germans and surrounded in the area of Semrino, Kabralovo. In the evening, by order of General Astanin, who reported to the front headquarters by radio about the hopelessness of the situation,

106

elk destruction of equipment and military property. A few hours later, permission was obtained to get out of the encirclement in small groups. In the second half of September, only separate consolidated units under the command of Colonels M.I. Chesnokova, I.S. Pavlov and General A.N. Astana - only about two thousand people. Another three hundred fighters were taken out of the enemy rear by par tisanes. For half a month, bypassing large settlements, the remnants of the 111th Infantry Division under the command of Colonel S.V. wandered around the rear of the enemy. Roginsky, who had no connection with the command and turned east. By the beginning of October, they reached the Volkhov River in the Yamno region, only three hundred soldiers and commanders crossed to the left bank. In the area of Pogostya, a group of artillerymen G.F. Odintsov.

According to German data, 21,000 prisoners, 316 tanks, and 600 guns were captured during the liquidation of the Luga pocket. Only the 24th Panzer Division of Colonel M.I. Chesnokova, who entered the battle for the first time on August 2, lost 162 tanks and 40 armored vehicles - all military equipment.

However, the losses of the Germans also grew, and the successes were less and less significant. Iufon Leeb's confidence shook considerably. Having visited the headquarters of the 4th Panzer Group, the field marshal realized that the prospects for the assault were vague, but there would definitely be nothing to transfer to the Center group:

"I learned that, unlike previous assessments that there is almost no enemy between the 41st Corps and Leningrad, in fact, the Pulkovo Heights are a fortified defense area densely occupied by enemy troops. A further advance of the 41st Corps through Pulkovo to the near line of encirclement, as ordered yesterday, should have resulted in heavy losses. In order to avoid this and leave the 41st Corps as combat-ready as possible, which it is now, it has been ordered to remain at the far edge of the encirclement for the time being.

On September 14, the OKW ordered the immediate withdrawal of the 41st Motorized and 8th Air Corps.

107

"... WHEN the troops were already looking forward to the triumph of a well-deserved victory," General Reinhardt recalled, "just like a cold shower, the news came from the headquarters of the tank group that instead of storming Leningrad there would be a blockade ... We simply could not understand anything . At the very last minute, the soldiers who did everything for victory were deprived of the crown of the winners.

On the morning of September 17, leaving the artillery behind, the 6th Panzer Division left the front line. On the night of September 18, the 1st Panzer Division began to load its surviving vehicles onto railway platforms south of Krasnogvardeisk, and the 36th Motorized Division headed for Pskov under its own power. Only Major General Landgraf's 6th Panzer Division, which had suffered heavy losses, was delayed for several days in order to withdraw from the battle and put itself in order. 32 thousand German soldiers and 260 tanks left the front near Leningrad, the 18th Army lost its shock fist.

September 18 evening: Halder noted: "The ring around Leningrad is not yet closed as tightly as we would like. It is doubtful that our troops will be able to go far

We can advance if we withdraw the 1st Panzer and 36th Motorized Divisions from this sector. Taking into account the need for troops on the Leningrad sector of the front, where the enemy has concentrated large human and material forces and means, the situation here will be tense until our ally, hunger, makes itself felt.

With the departure of the 41st motorized corps, the density of German battle formations decreased, which allowed the 90th rifle division, which had lost half of its composition and guns, to break through Pushkin to the north.

Almost immediately after the Germans reached Lake Ladoga, the Soviet command made an attempt to restore the land connection of the city with the country by strikes from the west with troops

Leningrad Front and from the east by the forces of the 54th Army. The army was unusual: it had eight di

108

vizi, 16th and 122nd tank brigades, 119th separate tank battalion, a significant amount of artillery; She reported directly to the Headquarters, and the Marshal of the Soviet Union and the Deputy Minister of Defense were in the commanders. The rear of the army was packed to capacity with military equipment and equipment, echelons with marching reinforcements intended both for Kulik's troops and for the entire Leningrad Front.

Grigory Ivanovich launched an offensive on September 10, and his first reports breathed optimism: the enemy was successfully "destroyed" and "exterminated", although he "passed over to exceptionally staunch resistance", rich trophies were taken. However, soon Kulik, who struck with a fan in all directions at the same time: on Kirishi, Pogostye, Mga, along the shore of Lake Ladoga - on Shlisselburg, found that he himself was running out of people and equipment catastrophically quickly, and the offensive was exhausted. The Germans held the front with mobile groups of the 20th motorized division, continuously pounded the left flank with the forces of the 12th tank division, maneuvered with reserves, while intensively fortifying the Sinyavino area, workers' settlements No. an average of 6-9 km, and the enemy captured Voronovo during this time.

On September 13, Voroshilov and Zhukov demanded that Kulik, ignoring the state of affairs on the left flank of the army, organize a powerful attack on Shlisselburg and then in the direction of Mga. Three days later, Stalin and Shaposhnikov ordered the marshal not to waste time on - den Shlisselburg, and concentrate all efforts on the release of the Mga station, "in order to open communication with Zhukov."

With Zhukov, Kulik did not get any interaction or mutual understanding. The commander of the Lenfront, considering the "liquidation of the Krasnoselskaya grouping" of the enemy as the main issue, singled out only one 115th rifle division and an understaffed naval brigade to break through the blockade, stating after the war that

109

the task assigned to them of forcing the Neva and breaking through the German defenses "was extremely difficult, one might say, unbearable." Indeed, the order received by division commander V.F. Konkov, demanded no more, no less than without means of crossing, without the support of artillery, tanks, aviation, to cross the Neva on the front from Ivanovsky to Moscow Dubrovka, seize a bridgehead and attack Mga. One day was allotted for the preparation of the operation.

At the same time, the general of the army did not hesitate to accuse the marshal of the USSR of indifference to the fate of Leningrad. On the night of September 15, a typical telephone conversation took place between the two military leaders:

"Zhukov. Greetings, Grigory Ivanovich! I would like for you and me to quickly begin work on clearing the territory on which we could shake hands and organize the rear of the Leningrad Front. I would like to briefly report on the situation. In turn, I want to inform what is being done near Leningrad."

For a person who has served in the army for at least a month, it is clear to the naked eye that Georgy Konstantinovich is frankly rude to an officer who has fallen into disgrace, but is still a senior officer in rank and position. Then Zhukov "persistently asked" Kulik to immediately go on the offensive to the Mga station and "to move the cavalry behind enemy lines as soon as possible." To which the marshal, of course, not such a brilliant commander to organize an operation in a new direction in one night, quite reasonably replied that he needed a day or two to bring up artillery, bring units to the starting line and work out their interaction on the spot. Especially since

The 54th Army had to advance through heavy wooded and swampy terrain, and it was opposed by a mobile and serious enemy - tank and motorized divisions of the 39th motorized corps. Subsequent events showed that the task assigned to Kulik was completely impossible under those conditions. But Zhukov, such independence of the marital and his commitment to compliance

110

Denia was not satisfied with the rules of military art, and he did not hide his irritation:

"It is clear that you primarily care about the well-being of the 54th Army and, apparently, you are not worried enough about the situation near Leningrad ... I realized that I cannot count on an active maneuver on your part. I will solve the problem myself."

The commander of the Leningrad Front immediately informed the Supreme Commander-in-Chief about this conversation, and he accepted Zhukovsky's truth, because with us the one who reported first is always right. Moreover, the leader was always ready to "sacrifice several divisions" for a good cause. Stalin put pressure on Kulik and stimulated him in a very peculiar way to active actions: "... keep in mind that if you hit M:gu properly tomorrow in order to break through or bypass Mga's defenses, you will receive from us two good personnel divisions and maybe a new tank brigade. But if you postpone tomorrow's strike, I give you my word that you will not receive two divisions or a tank brigade.

Kulik did not receive additional "good divisions", although it is likely that they could have said a "weighty word" at a decisive moment. The troops of the 54th Army failed to capture Mga, having washed themselves with blood for the first time at the Sinyavin Heights. However, Zhukov did not liquidate the Krasnoselsk group either. There was little sense in the fact that he threw untrained and poorly armed workers, sailors and Valaam cabin boys into battle and forced them to "fight as expected", without ensuring interaction with artillery and aviation, there was little. Regiments and battalions perished as a whole, causing only minor damage to the enemy.

On September 7, on the day when the Germans withdrew the main forces of the 3rd and 4th tank groups and the 8th aviation corps from the battle for Leningrad, General of the Army Zhukov issued combat order No. 0064:

"Given the particular importance in the defense of the southern part of Leningrad of the line: Ligovo, Kiskino, Verkh. Koyrovo,

111

Pulkovo Heights, the Moscow Slavyanka, Shushary, Kolpino districts, the Military Council of the Leningrad Front orders an announcement to all commanding, political and ordinary personnel defending the indicated line that all commanders, political workers and fighters are left without a written order of the Military Council of the Front and the army of the indicated line subject to immediate execution."

And today, a certain part of Russian historians consider this decision to be correct, amusingly explaining that Zhukov thus sought to "restore confidence in his forces and capabilities to the troops", and the order itself "laid the foundation of a moral turning point". Presumably, for the purpose of the final moral transformation and creative development of the ideas embodied in the infamous order No. 270, at the end of the month the front commander signed cipher No. 4976, which says: "Explain to all personnel that all families of those who surrendered to the enemy will be shot and upon returning from captivity, they will also all be shot." And for greater "confidence", the general drove his armies into the attack, shooting them in the back with machine guns.

"The Germans were continuously shelling the hillock," recalls the former company commander of the 42nd Infantry Regiment of the 268th Division A.F. Safronov, "a lot of people died here. We took the hillock, but the Germans opened such fire that the survivors had to slide back into the ravine, to the highway. And behind the highway - our detachment with machine guns "Maxim". Shoot and the Germans, and ours. The guys huddled in front of the hillock - there is nowhere to go.

Of course, the problem of the deterioration of the morale of the troops, due to continuous defeats, huge losses, the apparent mediocrity of the leadership, bestial attitude towards the soldiers, took place, it could not be otherwise. Desertion increased; on September 17-19 alone, the Leningrad commandant's office detained 4,425 servicemen. There were defeatist moods, crossbows, cases of going over to the side of the enemy and fraternizing with the Germans. But after all, the usual Bolshevik medicines used to raise

112

morale and strengthening discipline, were no better than the "disease" itself.

"The punitive organs worked perfectly for us," recalls N.N. Nikulin. "From Malyuta Skuratov to Beria, there were always professionals in their ranks, and there were always many who wanted to devote themselves to this noble and necessary cause in any state. In peacetime, this profession is easier and more interesting than arable farming and labor at the machine. And the profit is greater, and the power over others is complete. And in the war - do not expose your head to bullets, just make sure that others do it properly.

The troops went on the attack, driven by horror. The meeting with the Germans was terrible, with their machine guns and tanks, the fiery meat grinder of bombing and artillery shelling. No less terrifying was the implacable threat of execution. To keep the amorphous mass of poorly trained soldiers in check, executions were carried out before the battle. They grabbed some frail goners or those who blabbed something, or random deserters, who were always in abundance. They lined up the division with the letter "P" and finished off the unfortunate without talking. This preventive work resulted in a greater fear of the NKVD and the commissars than of the Germans. And in the offensive, if you turn back, you will receive a bullet from the detachment. Fear made me go to death. This is what our wise party, the leader and organizer of our victories, counted on. They shot, of course, after an unsuccessful battle. And it also happened that detachments mowed down regiments retreating without orders from machine guns. Hence the combat readiness of our valiant troops. Many surrendered, but, as you know, the Germans were not fed with sweet pies ... "

Neither Stalin nor Zhukov could have known about Hitler's directives and still believed that the main goal of Army Group North was to capture the city. The front commander concentrated the main forces to repel the German offensive in the area of the Pulkovo Heights.

113

Until the end of the month, Leeb continued the offensive, and quite successfully, on the near approaches to Leningrad, now only with the aim of diverting more forces of the Leningrad Front from the Luban direction, where the 54th Army was advancing in order to break the blockade of the city. Zhukov continued to build up forces on the Pulkovo line, removing them from Oranienbaum and the Karelian Isthmus.

September 17 was the most critical day for Leningrad. General Kleffel's 1st Infantry Division reached the coast of the Gulf of Finland near Strel'na, capturing part of Peterhof, General Hoynert's 58th Division occupied Uritsk. To the right, von Leiser's soldiers captured Pushkin.

The 8th Soviet Army was cut off from the rest of the troops of the Leningrad Front. There was not even a connection with the army; the German cut the wires, and our troops, even at the level of army headquarters, have not yet learned how to use the radio stations.

To prevent the enemy from breaking through to Leningrad through Uritsk, Zhukov ordered the 42nd Army to immediately organize a counterattack. She went into battle, recaptured the village, was moved further forward, cut off by the Germans, and the 21st "motorized rifle division of the NKVD, Colonel M.D. Papchenko-Ko" died. Return Uritsk by 42nd Army at all costs." The 5th and 3rd Guards DNOs and the 51st Separate Tank Battalion were thrown into the new attack.

Shcherbakov's army was ordered to organize a counterattack with at least five divisions in the direction of Krasnoe Selo and restore the torn front. Thirty years later, recalling and reflecting, the marshal highly appreciated the result achieved:

"An extremely important role in disrupting the plans of the enemy — a breakthrough to Leningrad through Uritsk — was played by the counterattack of the 8th Army. Its strike force, consisting of four rifle divisions, on the morning of September 19 went on the offensive in the general direction of Krasnoye Selo. Although this offensive did not lead to the restoration of defense here

114

us, but it forced the Germans to regroup part of the forces from the most dangerous direction for us, Urink-Leningrad, to Peterhof, which was foreseen by us in advance.

The writer V. Karpov in the book "Marshal Zhukov", describing this counterattack, simply falls into euphoria with admiration:

"But Zhukov is Zhukov!.. In a short time — in a day — Zhukov created a strike force. It is easy to say, created - from what? Where did you get the strength? In the sector of the 8th Army, after all, there were all the same defending divisions. He only condensed their battle formations, gave everything he could give to strengthen them, and on September 19 hit the advancing Leeb wedge in the flank. This was completely unexpected for the enemy. Imagine the state of von Leeb, who was already triumphant in his soul and saw, probably, the streets of captured Leningrad in front of him. And suddenly this blow to the flank, a blow literally in the stomach! After all, Leeb gathered everything he had at his disposal, throwing himself into the last and decisive offensive in the Pulkovo direction. There was nothing to repel Zhukov's blow on the flank of this grouping, it was necessary to withdraw forces from where luck and victory were outlined. Leeb understood that as long as the reserves approached, Zhukov's units would break out to the rear and grind everything so that they would have to move away from Leningrad altogether.

And Leeb gives the order to withdraw the mechanized corps, already aimed to strike there, where he saw the greatest success, and abandons this corps to save the flank. But that was exactly what Zhukov's goal was. The pressure on the Pulkovo frontier has weakened. Although the 8th Army did not plunge deep into the enemy's location, it fulfilled its task. "

There are at least three false notes in this ode to Zhukovsky's genius.

Firstly, what kind of motorized corps did von Leeb "take off" if he does not have one?

Secondly, the story had a rather sad continuation: on September 20, the Germans hit the left flank of the advancing Soviet troops, defeated them and forced them to leave even those settlements that they occupied before the epic counterattack, in particular Strel'na.

115

Then, in 1941, Zhukov did not at all consider that everything went as it was "foreseen in advance", and gave the command of the 8th Army a completely different assessment - traitors.

In a telegram dated September 22, the front commander orders the Army Military Council to organize a new offensive near Peterhof, and orders the commander and his headquarters to personally lead the troops into the attack, not forgetting, as usual, to "inspire confidence":

"If the 8th Army allows the capture of Peterhof by the Germans, the Germans will destroy Kronstadt for us.

The 8th Army, by its actions, not only brings the Leningrad Front down, but plays a treacherous role. While 23, 42, 55 A brilliantly repel all German attacks, inflicting enormous losses on them, the 5th Army, having 3-4 thousand Germans against it with 10-20 tanks, disgracefully scatters at the first shot. The military council is inactive, tuned more to

evacuation, and not a stubborn battle. Such a Military Council fully deserved severe punishment, up to and including execution.

I demand: Shcherbakov, Chukhnov, Kokorev to go to 2 bottom, And sd, 10 sd and personally lead them into battle. Shevaldin and Kokorev

'to warn commanders of all levels that they will be shot as cowards and traitors for leaving Peterhof and defensive positions south of Peterhof without permission. To announce to everyone - NOT A SINGLE STEP BACK.

A day later, after Petrodvorets was surrendered to the Germans, by order of the front commander, Army Commander-8 General Shcherbakov and a member of the Military Council, divisional commissar I.V. Chukhnov, a number of unit commanders were arrested. The army was taken over by Lieutenant General TI. Shevaldin.

Thirdly, both our commanders and enthusiastic chroniclers of their deeds quite deliberately neglect arithmetic. Answer the question "Where did Zhukov get his strength?" everything is easy. The general of the army had half a million soldiers and commanders at his disposal. Field Marshal Leeb, after the departure of the 41st motorized corps in mid-September to the Moscow direction and the 96th division to

116

Voronovo, on the eastern section of the Sinyavinsky ledge, "stormed" Leningrad, having seven infantry divisions in the asset - 291, 58, 1, 269, 121, 122 and the SS police division. It was their "fierce attacks" that heroically held back by "active defense" at least 27 divisions of General Zhukov. So the science of "compacting battle formations" was not great: only on the Oranienbaum bridgehead, which the Germans called the "Oranienbaum cauldron", were "all the same" 12 calculated divisions - 10, 281, 48, 191, 125, 268, 118, 261, 11th Rifle, 1st Guards and 2nd People's Militia, 5th and 2nd Separate Naval Infantry Brigades, as well as the 1st Tank Regiment of the 1st Tank Division. True, many of these formations, thanks to the advanced tactics of continuous attacks without fire support and the consolidation of lines, could only be called divisions conditionally: for example, in the 48th division, Lieutenant Colonel P.S. Romantsev left 1700 people, 3 heavy machine guns, 8 mortars and 2 guns. But according to General Okorokov, who became a member of the Military Council of the 8th Army: "The replenishment of the army's combat ranks was in full swing." (At the same time, "work was carried out to clean the units from strangers and hidden enemies", the removal of "Westerners" recognized as unreliable from combat units, that is, those who before the war lived on the territory of Western Ukraine, Western Belarus and the Baltic states. So the 74th Latvian regiment, mentioned by the bridgehead veterans, disappeared somewhere.)

So after all, only the 1st Infantry Division took Peterhof from the Germans. Zhukov wrote in Order No. 0043: "In front of the front of the 8th Army, units of one or two infantry divisions are operating."

The Soviet units on the bridgehead, which was 50 km long and 35 km deep, supported with powerful artillery fire the twelve-inch battleships "Marat" and "October Revolution", the forts Krasnaya Gorka and Gray Horse, the guns of cruisers and destroyers, 11th (356 -mm) and 18th (305-mm) railway batteries, armored trains No. 7 "Baltiep" and No. 8 "For the Motherland". There were plenty of troops and equipment here. September 16-18, the fleet carried out an operation to

117

the transfer from Oranienbaum to Leningrad of the 125th and 268th rifle divisions and the 47th regiment of corps artillery, which were withdrawn to the front reserve; in the second half of October, six more divisions were withdrawn. The blockade of the bridgehead and the reflection of almost daily Soviet attacks and counterattacks in 1941 were carried out by two infantry divisions of the Germans. And in 1942, and in 1943...

Three German divisions operated from Uritsk to the southern outskirts of Pulkovo. They were opposed by five divisions (44th (former 3rd Guards DNO), 21st, 56th (7th DNO), 189th (6th DNO) and 13th (5th DNO), 6th and 7th rifle and 123rd and 124th tank brigades of the 42nd army, built in two echelons. railway batteries |

According to Marshal Zhukov, only on the 17-kilometer section of Ligovo-Pulkovo, and only on direct fire, 529 guns were brought out. 441 guns operated in the Kolpino area, of which 300 guns were exposed to direct fire. By the way, what are guns for?

output

'direct fire? And in order to at least sometimes hit the target. For firing from closed positions, it is necessary to have reliable means of communication, well-developed crews, trained spotters, and a competent fire manager. All this was not there, so there were two or three hits per 100 shells fired, hence the eternal "shell hunger". Therefore, guns (sometimes even of special power) were often rolled out by entire divisions, and even by artillery regiments, to open forward positions, each crew saw its target and worked independently, firing at the enemy almost from a "dueling" distance. At the same time, significant losses in people and materiel were inevitable, but the accuracy increased to 8.5 percent. Artillerymen deciphered direct fire: "Farewell, Motherland", there was another designation - completely abnormal. But the "enemy command", in contrast to the native, according to observation

118

Marshal G.F. Odintsov, "he took care of his artillery, the enemy batteries most often fired from closed positions, they did not advance for direct fire."

"Despite the fact that we had few forces," General I.I. Fedyuninsky, - we continually dealt the enemy sensitive blows, not allowing him to withdraw from the front and transfer to Moscow, where the Nazis developed the offensive, not a single division ... Until the middle of October, there were battles in the Uritsk area, near the Peterhof here, for the state farm "Proletarian Labor". And they were a good school for us... In the army at that time there were many commanders called up from the reserve, who did not have solid military training and experience in leading a battle. Our commanders were distinguished by their courage, were devoted to the Motherland, but the lack of combat experience made itself felt... In the offensive, the rear sometimes lagged behind, although the advance was insignificant.

It is interesting that the Finnish commanders, who so famously regained the Mannerheim Line, against which the Red Army fought in bloody snot for three months, have enough combat experience. The hero of Khalkhin Gol is still learning, gaining experience.

The 4th division of the people's militia continued to "study" at the Tosnensky line. And here the offensive orders followed one after another - with the same tasks, with the same limited forces:

September 21: "4th BOTTOM to seize Ivanovskoye, Pokrovskoye, drive the enemy out of the anti-tank ditch south of Kolpino";

September 23: "4th DNO to seize the anti-tank ditch in the Kolpino colony area, crossings to Ust-Tosno";

September 25: "The 86th division (former 4th DNO) with armored platforms to seize the anti-tank ditch, cross the river Tosna, seize Ivanovskoye."

This ditch started from the village of Yam-Izhora on the Moscow highway, crossed the Oktyabrskaya and Kirovskaya railways, and after the Lenspirtstroy plant went out to the Neva. Only 2.5 km of the northern section of the ditch to a dirt road on

Ivanovskoye was in the hands of the Soviet troops, the remaining 8.5 km, up to the very highway, were in the possession of the Germans.

At the end of the month, the 268th and 125th rifle divisions removed from the Oranienbaum bridgehead joined the assault on the anti-tank ditch. All of them were opposed by the 122nd Infantry Division of General Makhholz.

To the right, from Kolpino to Pulkovo, the 168th, 90th and 70th rifle divisions, the 84th and 86th tank battalions of the 55th army fought the enemy's 121st infantry division in the same way. The losses of the army only in the area from Kolpino to the Neva in September 1941 amounted to more than 17 thousand people. The division of Colonel Bondarev in the battles for Slutsk lost 7,477 fighters - almost its entire composition. Zhukov in his memoirs praised the division as "particularly distinguished." The continuously attacking divisions were invariably given "confidence in their strength" by the seven machine gun and artillery battalions deployed in the second echelon of the army and four barrage detachments.

All this military squalor has been presented to us for 60 years as a great victory of a great strategic genius. Was there a victory? There was, no doubt. But is there anything to be proud of as a commander? By the way, large losses and at the same time insufficient "penetrating power" of the Soviet divisions in the offensive was laid down in the Combat Regulations. The generals who wrote it, fantasizing about the themes of the future Great War, apparently represented the Napoleonic "big battalions" and considered the bayonet strike of the infantry masses to be the crowning achievement of the attack. ("That's why the rifles have stocks to hit the fascist in the face!" "If you use the bayonet of the fascists, drive them out of their native land!") the regiment put three battalions, one in the back of the head of another. Only after fighting for more than a year, they figured it out: "Thus, the Soviet rifle division, "built for the offensive, had 8 rifle companies out of 27 in the first echelon of the attack. The remaining 19 companies, located behind the first echelon to a depth of 2 km, cover the field combat in continuous battle formations and are completely deprived

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sti to use their firepower. As a result of this, we have, firstly, exceptionally large, unjustifiable losses in personnel and firepower from enemy artillery, mortar and aviation fire, which are primarily suffered by subunits of the second and third echelons even before they enter the battle, due to which the offensive often bogs down in our country at the very first stage, and secondly, the forced inaction of more than a third of all infantry fire weapons of the division ... At the same time, units of the second and third echelons, taking on the main fire of mortars enemy artillery and aviation, in order not to suffer heavy losses, are forced to cling to the echelons in front, and then, for the same reason, merge into their battle formations. And this leads to the inevitable mixing of the battle formations of the first echelon with the subsequent ones, to their transformation into a crowd and to the impossibility of controlling them.

Let's put detachments behind and get the famous "Russian attack". For the enemy, such tactics are just a gift, because the Germans considered the main thing to be not the seizure of territory, but the destruction of manpower. But it is in vain to look for at least some "reflection" about the tactics of the battle from Zhukov. He uncomplicatedly believed that there should be a lot of "everything".

In a conversation with Marshal Shaposhnikov on September 14, Georgy Konstantinovich complained that he received only 268 aircraft on the Leningrad Front, somehow forgetting about 287 aircraft of the Baltic Fleet, including 170 fighters, 61 bombers and attack aircraft, and almost 300 fighters of the 7th Air Corps, which were regularly brought in to cover the combat formations of the front troops and deliver assault strikes.

Leningrad enterprises from July to December 1941 produced 713 tanks, 480 armored vehicles, 58 armored trains and armored platforms, over 3 thousand regimental and anti-tank guns, about 10 thousand mortars, over 3 million shells and mines. All this got to the front almost instantly. From the end of August, according to the decision of the State Defense Committee, all armored products remained at the disposal of

121

Leningrad front. Having irretrievably lost 273 tanks and 55 armored vehicles in August, and 262 and 43 armored vehicles in September, respectively, by early October the Lenfront had 339 tanks, half of which were KV and T-34s, and 162 armored vehicles. The 123rd Separate Tank Brigade (46 KV tanks) was formed on the basis of the 1st Red Banner Tank Division, and the 124th and 125th Tank Brigades were formed on the basis of the 24th Tank Division and other units. The latter differed in the composition of weapons and had 26 vehicles of the KV type, 11 self-propelled 76-mm installations based on the T-26 tank. In September, seven separate tank battalions of direct support were also created.

infantry.

To assist the ground forces, the Baltic Fleet provided 345 naval artillery barrels with a caliber from 100 to 406 mm, which in September fired over 25,000 shells at the enemy. 349 naval anti-aircraft guns were included in the Leningrad air defense system. 68 thousand sailors left the ships for the land front.

The German command clearly understood the importance of the fleet, and above all large artillery ships, in the defense of Leningrad and in connection with this undertook an air operation in the second half of September with the aim of destroying the naval forces based in Kronstadt. For the 2nd Attack Aviation Squadron of the Luftwaffe, commanded by Oberst Oscar Dinort, the warships became the main target. The first strike on Kronstadt was a group of fifteen Ju-87s. delivered on 19 September. Then massive raids were undertaken on 21, 22, 23 and 27 September. They were accompanied by artillery shelling of ships stationed on the Neva, in the seaport, in the sea channel. Numerous Soviet anti-aircraft guns responded with dense barrage fire. The most titled ace of the Third Reich, Hans Rudel, recalled: "The defense was simply deadly, nowhere else during the war did I see anything like it", but nothing could stop the pilots of the "pieces", veterans of the Polish, French, Balkan campaigns and the battle for Crete.

122

As a result, direct hits of large-caliber bombs sank the leader "Minsk", the patrol ship "Vikhr", the submarine M-74, minesweepers No. 31, 3Z and 53, transport, tugboat. The destroyer "Guarding" sank. The battleship Oktyabrskaya Revolyutsiya was damaged, into which the dive-bombers slammed six aerial bombs, the cruiser Kirov, the destroyers Strong, Proud and Grozyashchiy, a minelayer, and a number of other ships and vessels. At the battleship Marat, as a result of the impact of two 500-kilogram bombs and the subsequent detonation of ammunition, the entire bow was torn off along with a chimney and a multi-tiered superstructure. The rest of the hull lay on the ground of the Kronstadt harbor. 326 crew members were killed, including the commander of the ship, Captain 2nd Rank P.K. Ivanov and first mate captain 3rd rank V.S. Chufistova. The crippled battleship was never commissioned.

Even an optimist like Admiral Tributz admits that the Baltic Fleet has suffered heavy losses. Only Marshal Zhukov, who managed to be both the Chief of the General Staff and the Minister of Defense, but until the end of his life did not understand why a fleet was needed at all, and apparently considered that a destroyer was something like a large floating ship. tank or armored train, authoritatively wrote: "...significant damage to the fleet was not inflicted." More understandable, in the light of the propaganda war, is the message of the Soviet Information Bureau dated September 24, in response to the surprisingly accurate report of the German command on the successes of their aviation, which issued a rollicking refutation under the heading "Fascist nonsense about Soviet losses": "He's lying - he's not remembers," says a Russian proverb. So it happened with Hitler's nonsense.

There is no need to say that the Nazis did not sink any "ships of the Soviet fleet" and did not set fire to Soviet ships.

The Fascist fable is nonsense in oil. Hitler's soldiers are lousy, Goebbels' reports are false,

123

- stupidly joked our political workers-entertainers. The German agitation was notable for no less oakiness: "Beat the political commissar the Jew, the muzzle asks for a brick."

As L. Osipova noted: "Both our party members and the Germans are exactly the same in terms of narrowness of outlook and general illiteracy. Only the Germans are fatter and the collars are CLEANER.

If on September 20 at the headquarters of the Army Group "North" they recorded the complaints of General Küchler about "great damage from heavy artillery fire of Russian warships, which daily incapacitate about a hundred soldiers", then already on the 23rd they noted: "Enemy fire naval artillery was significantly weakened", and the 38th Army Corps, "to our joy, advanced".

On September 25, Field Marshal von Leeb was forced to report to the OKH that he could not continue the offensive with the available forces:

"We desperately need reinforcements... The High Command overestimates the situation in the army group

.North, characterizing it as absolutely favorable. It requires mastering the near boundary of the environment. In fact, the army group has already completely gone over to the defensive.

The next day, he expressed doubts about the ability of the 39th motorized corps to hold Shlisselburg and described the situation as a crisis. Most of the German formations lost 60-70% of their people and equipment near Leningrad and lost the opportunity to conduct further offensive operations to capture the city.

On September 26, Marshal Kulik, who declared that Mga station could not be taken with available forces, was recalled to Moscow, and the 54th Army was subordinated to the Leningrad Front. Its commander was a Zhukovsky nominee, Lieutenant General M.S. Khozin.

On September 29, German aviation stopped raids

124

on the objects of Kronstadt, leaving them at the mercy of the artillery. By this time, the Baltic Fleet had reduced by exactly half in terms of the number of combat units: | battleship, | cruiser, [leader, 13 destroyers, 20 submarines, 4 patrol ships, 1 minelayer and 26 minesweepers.

Thus ended the first and only assault on the city. He was recaptured at a high cost. From August 23 to September 30, the total losses of the troops of the Leningrad Front amounted to 116 thousand people, of which 65 thousand were irretrievable. The enemy, the advancing side, lost at least five times less. But the ball scheduled by Leeb at the Astoria Hotel had to be cancelled.

In fact, Hitler, taking into account the experience of Madrid and Warsaw, from the very beginning was an opponent of a direct assault, believing that street fighting in a metropolis turned into a fortress, divided into centers of resistance, having a developed network of underground communications, many channels and solid stone buildings, equipped with firing points, sniper positions and adapted for all-round defense, covered with obstacles and mine traps, where even an untrained fighter in an alley needs a bottle of Molotov cocktail to burn a tank or armored vehicle — such battles can absorb and grind entire German corps. The Führer thought in terms of modern warfare and was absolutely right, but only theoretically, because all this was not in Leningrad. In the summer-autumn of 1941 and up to Stalingrad

The Red Army did not know how and did not conduct street battles, all the cities - Minsk, Riga, Kiev, Smolensk and many others - after the fall of the field lines, it surrendered without a fight, taking out or destroying material values. Their defense was not foreseen by our military doctrine and charters. In the same way, no fortification work was carried out in Leningrad to turn it into a giant fortified area, it was not a fortress, and in September von Leeb had a real and, as subsequent events showed, the only chance to capture the city. (It could be assumed that the Soviet generals, "flesh from

125

the flesh of the working people", it was a pity to turn Soviet cities and towns into a battle arena, exposing the civilian population to disasters, but at the same time, using the "scorched earth" tactics, they blew them up, shot them from guns and set fire to the forces of specially formed teams of "torchlighters". ". But in the spring of 1945, we did not miss our chance, did not start any blockades and put 360 thousand people behind Berlin, lost 2000 tanks, but was it worth it?)

GK. Zhukov was lucky, and the glory of the savior of Leningrad stuck to him. This fame justified everything: extrajudicial executions, and draconian orders, and the "wasteful" method of warfare.

Even such a reasonable person as Air Marshal A.E. Golovanov, in post-war conversations with the writer F.I. Chuev admired Zhukov's firmness and his leadership qualities: "It was not for nothing that Stalin sent him to Leningrad instead of Voroshilov, and he, using force there, did it! After all, he shot there entire retreating our battalions! He, like Voroshilov, did not run with a pistol in his hand, did not lead the fighters himself into the attack, but set up a machine-gun barrier - and on the retreating, on his own! But I will say that in his place I would have acted exactly the same, if the fate of the country is being decided." From the foregoing, one could assume that entire battalions fled from the front, throwing their weapons, and Zhukov, faithful to his oath, "restored confidence to the troops" and "saved the country" with machine-gun barriers. In fact, it was the remnants of units that retreated after another unsuccessful suicidal attack on some "hillock" (front-line writer Viktor Astafiev, in correspondence with Vyacheslav Kondratiev, called our "greatest" commander "a poacher of the Russian people").

At the same time, it was somehow "forgotten" that Zhukov was sent to Leningrad with a completely different task - to break the blockade, which he did not solve.

126

The Leningrad strategic defensive operation was coming to an end, the German 18th Army began to dig into the ground. A complete blockade was never established. Army Group North not only failed to capture Leningrad, but was chained to it for a long time. At the same time, Reinhardt's divisions did not play a special role in the Moscow direction either: "There was an almost ten-day delay in the redeployment of the Göpner group to the south - and this at a time when even a day began to take on enormous importance. And when the German tanks left Leningrad, they were not able to fight. They needed restoration, replenishment and rest. In other words, they needed time."

In the battle on the distant and near approaches to Leningrad, the Soviet side threw 65 divisions, more than 700 thousand people. K. On September 30, losses amounted to almost half - 345 thousand commanders and Red Army soldiers, of which 214 thousand were irretrievable. In addition, the enemy captured or destroyed 1,492 tanks, 9,885 guns and mortars, and 1,702 aircraft. At the cost of these losses, Leningrad closed the way for the Wehrmacht in the northwestern sector of the Soviet-German front.

Chapter 5

BLOCKADE AND COUNTERBLOCKADE (October - December 1941)

The position of the besieged Leningrad and the troops defending it worsened all the time. The huge city, as well as the front, needed a timely supply of food, ammunition and other types of support. The proximity of the front line to residential areas was used by the Wehrmacht for the methodical barbaric extermination of the population and the destruction of the city. Long-range cannons were drawn up near Leningrad, and a special group of siege artillery was created.

The Germans believed that the fall of Leningrad under such conditions was a foregone conclusion. Giving evidence at the Nuremberg Trials, Leeb said:

"There was something supernatural in the fact that a million-strong city was located directly behind the front line... Communication with the central part of Russia was only along Lake Ladoga. But aerial reconnaissance reported that navigation on Lake Ladoga is carried out on a minimal scale. That is, in this way it was impossible to feed the city. The day was to come when the city would surrender."

Therefore, already on September 17, 1941, the Feldmarital was thinking: "What should be done with the city itself: should its capitulation be accepted, should it be completely destroyed, or should it die of starvation? So far, unfortunately, there is no decision of the Fuhrer in this regard.

128

At the headquarters of the 18th Army, various options were developed for getting rid of the civilian population. One proposed blocking Leningrad securely and waiting until all the inhabitants were dead. This decision had certain disadvantages: it provided a spectacular trump card for anti-Hitler propaganda and could adversely affect the "nervous system and inner self-control" of Wehrmacht soldiers. Another option was to let the civilian population through the front line and get two million starving people in their own rear; in any case, they were not going to feed the "subhumans". In any case, two postulates remained unchanged: "We do not occupy the city and do not feed its population." A third solution was proposed: in the event of the surrender of the army, create a fenced-off corridor along the shores of Lake Ladoga and allow women and children to go east, to the Russian rear, if, of course, Stalin agreed to this.

Finally, Hitler's decision followed - not to accept surrender, to kill everyone, to destroy the "hornet's nest". The directive of 29 September stated:

"The Fuhrer decided to wipe the city of Petersburg from the face of the earth. After the defeat of Soviet Russia, there is no interest in the continued existence of this large settlement. Finland similarly declared its disinterest in the continued existence of the city directly at its new border... If, as a result of the situation in the city, requests for surrender are made, they will be rejected.

On October 7, the head of the operational department of the OKW, General A. Jodl, informed the Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces, Field Marshal von Brauchitsch, that the surrender of Moscow and Leningrad should not be accepted: "We should expect great fears from epidemics. Therefore, no German soldier should enter the city. Whoever leaves the city against our lines must be driven back by fire ... It is unacceptable to risk the life of a German soldier to save Russian cities from

129

fire, just as it is impossible to feed them at the expense of the German homeland.

Soviet historians write what Goebbels is for. To justify this action, he was instructed to present to the world community a certain "Russian plan", according to which the Soviet authorities themselves intended to destroy Leningrad. But allegedly even the Minister of Imperial Propaganda did not

managed to concoct such a fake. It seems that Goebbels did not need to fabricate anything - he knew. .

On September 6, Stalin approved the "Action Plan in the event of a forced withdrawal from Leningrad by ships and vessels", which provided for the total destruction of the Baltic Fleet, the destruction "to the maximum extent" and for the longest possible period of shipyards, berths, warehouses and port facilities, blockage of fairways, harbors and canals. "Secret" mining of objects began, which, of course, was known to all sailors. Some suggested not to blow up the ships, but to be interned in Sweden. Such "wise men" were arrested and court-martialed with the wording "for the intention to hand over the ships of the Baltic Fleet to the Germans." The destruction and flooding of the "objects" was supposed to begin at the signal of "Chrysanthemum".

Well, it's clear with the fleet, lowering the flag in the face of the enemy is shameful. Although Churchill, fearing that the Germans would get the warships, even offered Stalin compensation for their sinking. But on September 13, Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs V.N. Merkulov, authorized by the State Defense Committee "for special cases", received a mandate to inspect preparatory measures for the destruction of enterprises, bridges, large buildings and other "important structures". Of course, there would not be enough explosives for the whole city, but more than 58 thousand city facilities were subject to simultaneous destruction, including 380 major enterprises, all rolling stock, all stationary power units and installations, railway and tram depots, telegraph and telephone exchanges, water utility installations, mills, bakeries

130

water, meat processing plants, refrigerators, printing houses, banks, a distillery and much more, for example, the Radio House and the Passage trading house.

At each district committee of the CPSU (b) of Leningrad, troikas were created as part of the first secretary of the district committee, the head of the district department of the NKVD and a representative of the engineering units of the Red Army. These troikas determined the list of enterprises located on the territory of the region, subject to decommissioning in the event of the withdrawal of Soviet troops. Each enterprise included in the list created its own troikas. They included: the director, the secretary of the party committee and the head of the secret department. These triples determined the objects that were the first to be put out of action. The general management of special events was entrusted to the secretary of the city committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the head of the NKVD Directorate of the Leningrad Region P.N. Kurbatki - on. The order to begin disabling objects was given by the Front's Military Council in such a way that these measures "were not premature, on the one hand, and on the other hand, so that they would not be late."

Explosives were indeed sorely lacking, as were specialists in their use. Therefore, in addition to the "undermining" method, the instructions provided for the "burning" of material values and the "mechanical destruction" (with sledgehammers) by the forces of the communist workers. Further, as the director of the plant named after Kalinin N.G. Grigoriev: "The entire staff of the plant with rifles in their hands goes to the nearest line of internal defense to repel German attacks."

Food stocks were also liquidated. Such a problem, for example, was solved at the Lenin flour mill: "Flour cannot be burned. Dousing with kerosene spoils only the top layer of flour. The plant must be instructed on the combined destruction of flour: dousing with gasoline, kerosene, followed by ignition with bottles of combustible mixture.

Sitting in the dock at Nuremberg, General Jodl testified that the "barbarism of the Russians" was one of the

131

reasons for the unwillingness of the German command to send troops to Leningrad: "Shortly before that, the Russian troops left Kiev, and as soon as we occupied the city, explosions of monstrous force began in it one after another. Most of the inner city burned down, 50 thousand people were left homeless, German soldiers suffered significant losses, as large masses of explosives were blown up... The order pursued only one goal - to protect the German troops from such catastrophes, because in Kharkov and Kiev, whole headquarters were blown into the air.

Soviet military literature is very proud of these "special operations", during which powerful radio high explosives were used for the first time, silent about the fact that not a specific building of the enemy headquarters, but the entire Khreshchatyk, flew into the air. By the way, radio signals were also carried from Leningrad to the cities left to the Germans: for example, in August, "three largest buildings" in Struga Krasny were blown up, under which sappers had laid 250-kilogram charges in advance.

In the city on the Neva, 325 tons of explosives were placed under the "objects".

As Admiral Tributs told Admiral Panteleev: "If the enemy breaks into the city, he will die under its ruins." Residents, of course, were not informed about the details of the most secret operation. Police officers, who discovered explosives and detonators in the basements of buildings in the course of operational-search activities, were ordered to "pay no attention."

So it turns out that Hitler was thinking about victory, Stalin was taking measures in case of defeat, but the thoughts of both dictators flowed in the same direction: both doomed the city and its inhabitants to death. "If all this is true," the writer Daniil Granin commented on the first publications about Operation D, "it becomes clear why the city authorities did not stockpile food supplies. They were busy mining."

And why should Goebbels invent something, if the Abwehr, having analyzed the materials of interrogations of prisoners of war, has already

132

On September 21, he reported: "Large-scale mining of the city has been carried out", on October 2: "They report that it is planned to undermine the most important objects. Powerful explosive devices have been planted in the city", October 6: "Businesses, bridges, and, apparently, sewerage, are reportedly mined and prepared for explosion by representatives of the central authorities." October 24 is the date of the report of the head of the security police, which, in particular, states: "According to the data of a credible engineer, a number of high-rise buildings on International Avenue are equipped with explosive charges. The intention is confirmed to barricade the city in the event of the entry of German troops by blowing up these buildings.

Another tale from those that Zhukov generously fed to the writer Konstantin Simonov after the war is about how he saved the Baltic Fleet: "Arriving in Leningrad, I immediately got to a meeting of the Military Council. The sailors discussed the question in what order they should tear up the ships so that the Germans would not get them. I told the commander of the fleet, Tributs: "Here is my mandate," and handed him a note written by Comrade Stalin, where my powers were defined. "As a commander of the front, I forbid you this. Firstly, if you please, clear the ships so that they do not explode themselves, and secondly, bring them closer to the city so that they can fire all their artillery." You see, they were discussing the issue of mining ships, and on them, on these ships, there were forty rounds of ammunition. I told them: "How can ships be mined at all? Yes, they might die. But if so, then they should only die in battle, shooting. Our military historians, as a rule, retired colonels, who perceive "Memoirs and Reflections" as a kind of Bible of war, are beside themselves with emotion from Zhukov's principles: "Zhukov, in essence, canceled Stalin's decision. The latter learned about it from A.A. Zhdanov. However, the Supreme Commander could not help but appreciate the courage and foresight of the new front commander and made it clear that let him remain as Zhukov decided.

133

No matter how! On September 20, a report from the head of the 3rd department of the KBF landed on Zhukov's desk: unexpectedly, the "Tulip" signal was given to the fleet, which, according to the TUS established for special operations, means to stop carrying out destruction activities. It soon became clear that this signal was given according to the table of artillery negotiations, meaning an immediate ceasefire. The preparations for the special operation, on the one hand, in most cases were entrusted to minor people, and on the other hand, received wide publicity. As a result, the presence of negative sentiments was noted, which predetermine the sad outcome of the defense of Leningrad. The resolution of the front commander on the document: "Vol. Isakov. 1. Urgently investigate and arrest provocateurs. 2. Report why such responsible work is going criminally badly. ZHUKOV".

So the far-sighted and courageous Georgy Konstantinovich "cancelled" Stalin's decisions. It is curious what would happen if the gunners gave some other signal, for example, "Chrysanthemum"?

Many Leningraders knew about our preparations, you can't hide the sewing in a bag, they rather harbored delusions about the intentions of the Nazis, not too much believing the reports of the Soviet propaganda about the atrocities perpetrated in the occupied territories, and naively believing the Germans to be a "cultural nation".

In any case, the Leningraders "had nowhere to go." All that was left was to fight and survive.

By the beginning of October, the Germans abandoned the idea of taking the city by storm and switched to a positional struggle. But even when tank formations stopped operating near Leningrad and the activity of the Luftwaffe dropped sharply, Zhukov continued to counterattack in the area of Pulkovo and Peterhof.

At the end of September, Georgy Konstantinovich decided to organize a general offensive. The main blow must

134

was to inflict the 55th Army, consisting of six divisions and two tank brigades. Moreover, with the right flank, she was supposed to liberate Pushkin and Slutsk, and with the left - go to Tosno and, in cooperation with Khozin's army, advancing in four divisions, surround and destroy the enemy's Mginsky grouping.

On the right wing of the front, the 42nd and 8th armies were to strike with six divisions and one brigade in the direction of Znamenka, Uritsk, Novy Peterhof. To help the infantry advancing head-on on the fortified area created by the Germans, Zhukov decided to land amphibious assault forces on the southern coast of the Neva Bay. During their planning, the chief of staff of the fleet, Rear Admiral Yu.F. Rall called for a landing, but only with the support of naval artillery. The front commander did not agree with this, arguing that the preliminary processing of the bridgeheads unmasked the landing force. Nat and decided. Landings were landed at the command of the front headquarters, suddenly both for the Germans and for the command of the Leningrad naval base, which was supposed to organize them, without preparation, without preliminary reconnaissance, in the complete absence of information about the enemy. Just in the evening, the commander of the front summoned Admiral Panteleev and, pointing a pencil at the map, ordered at dawn: "Here, land a company of sailors to meet the forty-second army. Do not invent any landing operations there. Act quickly and discreetly. Move the company to me, and that's it."

On October 1, the 44th Rifle Division of the 42nd Army, together with the 6th Marine Brigade and the 124th Tank Brigade, again began fighting for Uritsk, Staro-Panovo, Ivanovka, Sosnovaya Polyana. Major-General Zaitsev's 13th division conducted active combat operations near Kiskino and Verkhneye Koyeroovo. At the same time behind the rear of the enemy, in Peterhof and Strelina, detachments were landed, formed from a company of marines of the 6th brigade. The paratroopers successfully advanced into the depths of the coastal strip, however, without receiving support from the ground forces and having no communications, they were destroyed. On the night of October 3, boats of the protection of the water

area of the Leningrad Naval Base, a reinforced company from the same 6th Marine Brigade was "transported" and landed east of the Strelna plant "Lishmash". The troops landed safely, deepened into the territory occupied by the enemy, then got surrounded and died.

The 8th Army, marking time, received an order to organize an offensive by October 5 with the forces of the 10th and 11th rifle divisions and a separate tank battalion in order to destroy the enemy in the Troink, Peterhof area. On the night before the offensive, a detachment of 498 fighters led by Colonel A.T. was landed in New Peterhof. Vorozhilov and Commissioner A.V. Petrukhin, formed from ship commanders, electricians, miners of battleships, instructors from schools of the training detachment, cadets of the naval political school. The landing party was supposed to cut the enemy's Peterhof wedge, facilitating the connection of the troops of the 8th and 42nd armies. But!

"Somehow," marshal Zhukov is surprised, "the enemy discovered the landing approach by sea and met him with fire while still on the water. The sailors were not embarrassed by the fire of the enemy

_ ka. They got ashore, and the Germans ran. carried away

'First successes, the sailors pursued the fleeing enemy, but by morning they themselves were cut off from the sea.' In a three-day battle, the paratroopers all died, paying in full for Zhukovsky's hobbies. On the night of October 6 and October 8, in the Strelna area, the Nishmash plant landed troops formed from units of the 20th division of the NKVD - with the same result, since the offensive of the 8th and 42nd armies failed, barely starting, due to significant losses in personnel. In the latter case, the command of the LenVMB nevertheless tried to "invent an operation" and applied for air support for the landing. However, the headquarters of the Air Force of the Baltic Fleet did not accept the application.

"But the paratroopers did not give their lives in vain, they inflicted damage on the enemy in manpower," consoles Admiral V.F. Tributs.

"The landing forces, although they were not able to fully fulfill their tasks, because we were unable to connect with them, all

but inflicted significant losses on the enemy," sings along Commissar General A.D. Okorokov. What kind of "loss" and what was the "damage" - none of the 1811 paratroopers will tell.

During the operation, the 124th tank regiment of Major Lukasik was also completely killed. Tankers, advancing from the direction of Leningrad, on October 8 "broke through" the enemy defenses: the Germans, having missed the heavy KV, cut off the Soviet infantry with fire. Having reached the area of Strelna, the regiment received the task of searching for the missing troops. A day later, it was destroyed, only three people left the encirclement. An entry about this battle was preserved in the combat journal of the 18th German army: "The anti-aircraft units attached to the 50th army corps, preventing a tank breakthrough near Uritsk, knocked out 17 heavy (52 tons) enemy tanks in defensive battles. Of these, eight tanks were destroyed within 70 minutes by the crew of non-commissioned officer Neumann.

From the mouth of Tosna to Yam-Izhora, the 168th, 86th, and the 125th and 268th rifle divisions of the 55th Army, which arrived here at the end of September from the Oranienbaum bridgehead, continued to storm the anti-tank ditch and the village of Ivanovskoye. A new offensive was planned for October 3.

"The time allotted for preparation was completely insufficient, and the headquarters could not meet it," recalls General V.P. Sviridov. - But, when the commander of one of the divisions reported that his units were not ready and asked for a delay, the commander of the 55th Army, General

IL. Lazarev replied: "Comrade Stalin knows about the hour of the offensive, and I will not postpone the operation. Report it yourself if you want."

There was nothing to argue against such a weighty argument. Again, in turn, without artillery and interaction with each other, regiments and battalions attacked.

"The battalion commander gave me a task: to rewrite the newly arrived replenishment from the Kazakhs in squads and platoons and put them in their places," says Yu.I. Smolensky, former

137

adjutant of the 3rd battalion of the 330th regiment of the 86th rifle division. "Something terrible has begun: Kazakhs don't speak Russian, and I don't hear their names. Somehow rewrote, some put only numbers. Scattered in places. Swamp, snow, night. It is impossible to dig - water immediately appears. The soldiers lie between the bumps, where the front line is unclear.

In the morning, the order: following in the second echelon, force Tosna; the first echelon was almost completely destroyed. On the shore and in the water - a lot of corpses, ours and Germans. There are no floats. (And it's true, how much that Tosna is, only 120 meters.) We swam - some on a log, some like it. ("If only one bitch commander tried to swim under fire on these "handy means," wrote Viktor Astafyev.) They overcame Tosna, climbed onto a steep bank to the German trenches. The Germans ran. Our, hungry, instead of gaining a foothold, began to "trophy" in the officers' dugouts: there is wine, there is food. The Germans, meanwhile, came to their senses and launched a counterattack. Now we ran - back for Tosna.

Again we are on our shore, in a swamp. Overcoats are wet, there is nowhere to dry, you can't build a fire ... "

D.V. Ivanov, former assistant chief of staff of the 947th joint venture of the 268th division, recalls: "On September 30, 1941, we arrived at st. Pontonnaya and received an order on the move, without reconnaissance and artillery preparation, to attack the enemy, who had come to the western bank of the river. Tosny. The battle began at dawn | October in difficult marshland conditions. German firing points were not suppressed, and our attacks did not bring success. The actions of small aviation were also ineffective and could not help the infantry. During the first three days of fighting, we lost 50% of our personnel, wounded and killed. The offensive continued until October 13, but it was not possible to succeed.

On October 14, the division took up defense along the river. Bolshaya Izhorka for 5 km ... Opponent of offensive

138

took no action, but constantly fired, and we lost from his fire 15-20 person per day.

On October 22, our offensive began on the village of Ust-Tosno. Artillery preparation was carried out with 76-mm guns of the 1902/30 model, which turned out to be incapable of destroying enemy firing points, both in terms of time and the number of projectiles fired. Each time during the attack, German pillboxes and bunkers came to life and opened heavy fire on the attackers.

On November 3, units of the 70th and 90th SDs relieved us. They were given the same task: to capture the village of Ust-Tosno and cross to the eastern bank of the river."

And Colonel V.L. Zinoviev, former head of the operations department of the headquarters of the 125th rifle division, Major General P.P. Bogaychuk, recalls:

"The enemy, who captured the anti-tank ditch, occupied a more advantageous position than the subunits and units of our formation. Having adapted the moat for defense, the Nazis dominated the area. And the trenches of our forward line passed through the open,

unprotected field, valley. She was shot through by all types of weapons to a great depth. The valley boiled from enemy artillery and mortar fire, shot through by machine-gun and automatic bursts, sowed death. We had to put up with the fact that we did not have a more reliable and advantageous position, because behind our backs were Kolpino, the Izhora plant, and Leningrad.

...capturing the central part of the moat, we triumphed early. Before dawn, the fascists opened such cannon-mortar fire on the front line and our rear that the sky was hot. And from the side of the railway track and Yam-Izhora, machine guns fired on the flanks of the shock group. In a few minutes, so many shells and mines were fired at us that it seemed that there was no living place left. The shock group of the 466th regiment and a company of fighters sent at night to help it by the commander of the army left the anti-tank ditch.

139

Everything remains the same.

No one gave the order to seize the anti-tank ditch. It was the initiative of our divisional commander, approved by the commander of the 55th Army. Now, when the fascists again occupied the moat, the order of the high command followed: to return the moat at all costs! And those responsible for the loss of the moat must be punished!

And the trial began... Searches were conducted for the perpetrators of the surrender of the moat. The divisional prosecutor's office joined this thankless job. She found a "specific culprit." The commander of the 466th Rifle Regiment, Major Kozino, was handed over to the tribunal... After that, a saying was born in the division: "If there was a military tribunal, but the culprits will always be found."

... Since the shock group of Major Kozino first took the anti-tank ditch, it began to pass from hand to hand. At night or before dawn, we took it, and in the morning the Nazis captured the moat. So it was in October, so it was later.

The 125th Rifle Division lost more than

- 5 thousand people.

In the second half of the month, the 86th and 168th rifle divisions were transferred from the Tosnensky line to the Neva Dubrovka. The 70th, 85th (former 2nd DNO), 43rd and 9th divisions and the 7th Marine Brigade arrived to replace them. They were given the same task: to take an anti-tank ditch, capture Ust-Tosno and cross to the eastern bank of the river. On the German side in this direction, all the same 122nd division and the right-flank regiment of the 121st Infantry were on the defensive. divisions.

The total losses of the 55th Army in October amounted to 17,235 fighters and commanders.

On October 6, Army General Zhukov was recalled to the Western Front to save Moscow. Command of the Leningrad Front was taken by Major General I.I. Fedyuninsky, the 42nd Army was headed by the former commander of the 10th Rifle Corps, Major General I.F. Nikolaev.

140

The forces of Army Group North in early October were dispersed in several operational areas. German troops fought on the front south of Lake Ilmen, along the Volkhov and Neva rivers, on the southern approaches to Leningrad, against Soviet troops on the Oranienbaum bridgehead and the Moonsund Islands. Unable to create a powerful enough strike force to storm Leningrad, the Germans, as already mentioned, decided to destroy the city with artillery fire and air strikes, and starve its defenders to death.

In order to finally deprive Leningrad of communication with the country, the German command, on the initiative of Field Marshal Leeb, returned to the idea of a complete blockade in early October. The idea was to break the resistance of the Soviet troops on the Volkhov and, by striking through Tikhvin to the Svir River, cut off land communications leading to Lake Ladoga, thereby depriving Leningrad and the troops defending it of the last opportunity to receive help on this lake and, at the same time, - but having united with the Karelian army of the Finns, form the outer ring of the blockade as a united front.

Hitler first expressed this idea on October 1, at the very beginning of the attack on Moscow. But the operation of the Army Group North was postponed until it became possible to concentrate a sufficient number of infantry here and replenish the mobile troops with people and materiel. By a directive of October 7, the Wehrmacht High Command reaffirmed the previously set task to destroy Leningrad and exterminate its population. In the first half of October, the 250th Infantry Division of the Spanish Falangist Volunteers, the 212th and 227th Infantry Divisions from France, the 7th Airborne Division from Greece and the 2nd Infantry Division arrived in the zone of Army Group North. SS brigade from Germany. Now von Leeb's group consisted of 33 divisions and 2 brigades. The aircraft fleet of the 1st Air Fleet consisted of 250 aircraft.

For an offensive in the Svir direction, the enemy allocated the 39th motorized, 1st and 38th army

141

corps. The remaining forces of the 16th Army were involved south of Lake Ilmen, while the 18th Army held the Mginzsk ledge and fought on the southern approaches to Leningrad.

Soviet troops in the northwestern direction occupied the following position: the 7th separate army opposed the Karelian army of the Finns along the Svir River, and the 23rd army of the Leningrad Front on the Karelian Isthmus along the old state border opposed the troops of the Southeastern Army Finns; The 42nd and 55th armies defended the southern approaches to Leningrad; The Neva task force operated to the east along the northern bank of the Neva, and the 54th Army took up defenses along the eastern face of the Mginzsky ledge; The 8th Army held the coastal bridgehead in the Oranienbaum area; The 8th separate rifle brigade continued to defend the Hanko peninsula, while the 3rd separate rifle brigade and naval units fought on the Moonsund Islands. To the south of the 54th Army, the 4th and 52nd separate armies, subordinated directly to the Headquarters, and the Novgorod Army Group of the North-Western Front were defending.

The Soviet command, in turn, planned

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conduct an operation to de-blockade the city. Her plan was approved

den Stavkoy 14 October. The purpose of the operation was to encircle and destroy the enemy's Schlisselburg-Sinyavino grouping by the end of the second day and restore land communications Leningrad with the country. The Baltic Fleet began to carry out the transfer of six divisions from the Oranienbaum bridgehead. The Military Council of the Leningrad Front planned to start the operation on October 20th. To participate in it, 10 rifle divisions, 2 rifle and 4 tank brigades were involved - a total of 70 thousand people, 475 guns (for some reason this figure is given "excluding reinforcement artillery and the Red Banner Baltic Fleet"), 160 tanks. The Air Force of the Leningrad Front had 225 serviceable aircraft, the Air Force of the Baltic Fleet - 134.

142

The enemy, according to Soviet data, had about 54 thousand people and 450 guns in the Sinyavino direction. He relied on a strong defense with a large number of engineering structures,

built in a wooded and swampy area and covered with mine-explosive and wire barriers.

Even on the night of September 9-20, on the orders of Zhukov, part of the Neva Operational Group, commanded by Lieutenant-General P.S. Ishennikov, - the 115th rifle division, the NKVD battalion and the 4th marines brigade - on fishing punts assembled along the entire right bank, pleasure boats and home-made rafts delivered from the city, secretly, without loss, crossed the Neva and occupied a bridgehead on the left coast near Moscow Dubrovka. Further advance was halted by stubborn resistance and counterattacks by units of the 20th Motorized Division with the 426th Regiment of the 126th and 287th Regiments of the 96th Infantry Division attached to it. The hastily conceived offensive against MSU, organized in one day, failed, but there was no turning back: the command of the front and the group all the time demanded active actions, invariably setting the tasks of "taking" and "cleansing". The units melted away in daily attacks, but there was no success.

On the night of September 20, in the area of Shlisselburg, the 1st division of the NKVD tried to cross the river. Colonel Donskov, counting on surprise, decided to organize the crossing at night, not to carry out artillery preparation before it began. Apparently, for the sake of preserving military secrets, reconnaissance of the left bank of the Neva and the identification of the enemy's fire system were not carried out. At the same time, they also neglected the training of personnel in boarding and disembarking and the use of watercraft. Despite such secrecy, the Germans timely discovered the beginning of the crossing and shot down the first two echelons of rifle regiments on the water with hurricane fire. The third echelons had nothing to cross the water barrier, and there was no need to: there was no surprise. On September 26, having obtained motor boats, Donskov decided

143

to land the least affected 2nd Rifle Regiment directly on the Shlisselburg pier. At 6 o'clock in the morning, two companies of the first echelon broke into the northwestern outskirts of the city, started a battle and went missing, the boats were burned by the enemy upon their return.

The Ladoga military flotilla tried to provide all possible assistance to the Chekists in capturing Shlisselburg, during the period from September 19 to October 2, it made five attempts to land troops on the coast. In this case, the land authorities, in mediocrity of execution and indifference to the lives of their subordinates, socialistically competed with the naval authorities. Zhukov believed that the stormy Ladoga was not a hindrance to the Soviet "Marimans", the admirals answered "Yes", without any preparation they put assault groups on ships and threw them into the surf before reaching the shore. As a result, most of the landing force — 105 cadets of the Naval Border School, 40 naval divers, 44 soldiers of the guard company — were simply drowned. In the report on the results of the combat activity of the flotilla, Captain 1st Rank V.S. Cherokov about Shlisselburg

landings wrote that "... all of them were not successfully completed

due to the fact that they were carried out hastily, without taking into account the meteorological situation. The experience of landing operations showed the need for preliminary navigational reconnaissance, the production of more reliable navigation support. It is no longer possible for the landing force to have to walk on water for about 3 kilometers (!!), spending 2-2.5 hours on this, as was the case during the operation at Shlisselburg, although there were opportunities to avoid it.

Well, you must! On German maps, this largest body of water in Europe is called the Ladoga Sea, in a storm the wave here reaches eight points, the prevailing depths are 35–140 meters. I wonder how the paratroopers, hung with weapons, walked "on the water"? One of the survivors has a belt - the Nile - up to the neck.

At the end of September, an attempt was also made by the forces of the 10th Infantry Brigade to cross the Neva in the area

It is gratifying and to capture another bridgehead, but it turned out even worse. After a three-day battle, almost the entire brigade died along with its commander, Colonel V.N. Fedorov.

Georgy Konstantinovich became very angry, dismissed General Ishennikov and appointed General V.F. Konkov with an invariable parting word: "The task is the same - more activity."

On the left bank, only the Nevsky Piglet, known for the courage of its defenders and the incredible number of casualties, was managed to cling to - a piece of land about one and a half kilometers along the front and 700-800 meters deep. The entire bridgehead and approaches to it on the western bank of the river were viewed by the enemy and were under constant artillery, mortar and machine-gun fire. Soviet troops died on the approach to the Neva, and during the crossing, and on the bridgehead itself, which was literally plowed up by shells and mines. The German command, having reinforced the 20th motorized division with units of the 8th tank division, made efforts to eliminate the "patch", but on September 22 it was forced to "recognize the existence of a plandarme on the Nevsky Front". The Russians stood to the death. On September 24, a representative of the Wehrmacht High Command, General Paulus, arrived at the Zorn command post to hear: "The division has given up its last forces, and it is no longer capable of offensive operations. The entire cast needs a few days to rest." Paulus agreed, and the 20th Motorized Division, exhausted and reduced by a third, was replaced by General Schelde's 96th Infantry Division. At the end of September, units of the 7th Airborne Division began to arrive from the Mediterranean Sea to the Nevsky Front, and they immediately felt that Crete was not here for them.

"September 30," writes a German military historiographer, "splendidly armed paratroopers, who had arrived at the Nevsky Front with enthusiasm the day before, began to return back in ambulances. Their mood changed dramatically. "It's better to jump three times

with a parachute to the island of Crete than to spend one day in Russia!" they said. Obviously, in such a critical assessment of the situation, the lack of experience of the soldiers to fight on land affected. In the course of stubborn battles, the two front edges became so close that in moments of calm one could hear the conversation and cough of enemy soldiers, the Germans used up to 8000 grenades daily: "Machine guns, rifles, hand grenades, butts, sapper shovels and bayonets were weapons with which soldiers from both sides rushed at each other. The terrible outcome of these battles remains in the memory of the former German paratroopers even after decades.

Nevertheless, the German command succeeded in the main thing: the "piglet" was localized, shot down along with the places of crossings, lined with minefields, barbed wire and equipped positions.

It was from here that General Fedyuninsky planned a strike towards General Khozin. Four divisions were squeezed into the "patch", equal in size to the area of defense of a rifle battalion, and the headquarters of the already destroyed 4th brigade was evacuated. New formations were concentrated and waited for their "turn" on the western coast. For fire support of the troops, the fleet organized a special artillery group, which included 16 stationary and 6 railway batteries, 4 gunboats and 5 destroyers (these are just those barrels of not the smallest caliber that our historiography "does not take into as well as the Stalinets-28 armored train equipped with 100 mm naval guns and 120 mm mortars, or 152 mm howitzers of the RVGK regiments). Engineers racked their brains over the problem of how to deliver heavy tanks to the bridgehead, considering the most exotic projects: EPRON specialists proposed dragging combat vehicles along the bottom with steel cables, metro builders undertook to dig a tunnel under the Neva, sailors advocated welded pontoons.

Occupying a 230-kilometer front from Lake Ladoga to Lake Ilmen, three Soviet armies and the Novgorod army group numbered 160,000 people. Theirs is our military history

also "does not take into account", reporting

146

that they were weak, understrength and "defended on the lines". But General G.E. Degtyarev, who arrived in the 4th Army as chief of artillery, paints a completely different picture: "The commander personally acquainted me with the area of upcoming operations, with the composition of the troops, with the tasks assigned to them. And these tasks, in essence, boiled down to one thing - to attack in order to break through the enemy blockade of Leningrad!" What follows is a detailed description of the vigorous preparations for the offensive, which was to begin on October 18, that is, two days before the attacks of the Leningrad Front.

However, on October 16, Army Group North launched an offensive in the Tikhvin direction. The main blow was delivered by the motorized corps of the "hardened wolf" of General Schmidt, consisting of the 8th and [2nd tank, 18th and 20th motorized divisions, from the Volkhov bridgehead to Gruzino, Budogoshch, Tikhvin, Lodeinoye Pole. At the same time, the 11th and 21st Infantry Divisions launched an offensive along both banks of the Volkhov River in the direction of Volkhovstroy, and the 126th Infantry Division in the direction of Malaya Vishera.

The area on which the battle unfolded was defined by German topographers as "virtually unmapped", and the soldiers called it "brown jungle". Impenetrable forests, swamps, lack of roads - all this in itself represented an insurmountable obstacle for the advancing side, limiting its maneuver and making the actions of mobile formations absolutely predictable. And today in this area there are not many places where tanks can pass. Even 50 years later, the only communication linking Chudovo and Tikhvin was marked on the map as an unpaved one; almost parallel to it ran the Budogoshch-Tikhvin railway line. The second communication line, Kirishi-Volkhov-Novaya Ladoga, ran along the left bank of the Volkhov River. It would seem that under such conditions, having 16 divisions, one rifle and two tank brigades, 8 corps artillery regiments in four armies, it was possible to organize an insurmountable defense. However, it happened differently:

147

Stretched into a thread without second echelons and reserves on the 130-kilometer line, the formations of the 4th and 52nd separate armies were unable to resist the blow of the German fist.

They did not prepare for this, carried away by their upcoming "breakthrough", regardless of the intentions of the enemy, about whom they had a little more information than about life on Mars: it seems that the Germans are still somewhere. General Degtyarev, for example, describes the check by the army headquarters of the 285th Rifle Division's readiness for an offensive: "At the headquarters of the division, brief reports were heard from the chiefs of the operational and reconnaissance departments, and then from the chief of staff of the division. All of them suffered from one shortcoming: too superficial judgment about the enemy, based on random facts... In the end, General V.F. Yakovlev asked the division commander a question:

- And in what direction in your zone is the main attack of the enemy most likely?

- The division commander hesitated and with some unseeing eyes stared at the map that lay in front of him. There was an awkward pause."

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The pause was broken first by the enemy.

In general, the battle of the Wehrmacht with the Red Army during this period most of all resembles the fight of a lightweight boxer against a village bull. Flyer strikes are professionally accurate, they almost always hit the target, but are not devastating enough. The guy in Budyonovka can shine in the jaw soundly, but mostly he kneads the air with his fists, since he is blindfolded.

As a result...

By October 20, the Germans broke through the Soviet "defense" and began to advance in three directions. On October 22 they captured Bolshaya Vishera, on October 23 - Budogoshch, on the 24th - Malaya Vishera. There was a threat of a breakthrough to Tikhvin. The troops of the 4th Army, dissected into parts, Lieutenant General of Nantes V.F. Yakovlev (285, 311, 292nd rifle, 27th cavalry divisions, 119th separate tank battalion) rolled back like billiard balls in different directions.

148

After the war, analyzing the reasons for the defeat, Marshal K.A. Meretskov writes: "A significant role in the failures of our troops was played by the fact that almost all units and formations of the 4th Army, including its headquarters, had no experience in conducting combat operations in difficult conditions of wooded swampy terrain. The headquarters lost control, the troops were defenseless against enemy air strikes. And the terrain was really difficult. Forests and swamps almost completely covered the space between the Volkhov River and Tikhvin. Numerous rivers and streams crossed the paths of the movement of troops. Settlements were rare. There were few roads, vast swamps did not freeze even in severe frosts. It is hard to argue with the marshal, but the enemy had to overcome all this, it was he who attacked, and not the 4th Army. And where, it is interesting to know, did the Germans have experience in combat operations in Russian swamps? In less than a year, our generals will learn how to fight in the Don steppes and mountains of the Caucasus in exactly the same way. On what terrain was the Red Army preparing to conduct combat operations at all?

In such a situation, the offensive operation of the troops of the Leningrad Front began to unblock the city. A "conveyor of death" was organized on the Nevsky "patch": divisions without tanks (not a single vehicle could be transferred across the river) and air cover alternately launched frontal attacks on heavily fortified heights and lost most of the personnel, the remnants of the units were buried in land, a new division came to the bridgehead WITH THE SAME task. By the end of October, the 115th, 86th, 265th rifle and 20th divisions of the NKVD, having expanded the bridgehead by one kilometer along the front, all together had 1,500 fighters. To meet them along the shortest path, through swamps, peat extraction and the positions of two German divisions (126th and 227th), Khozin's 54th army tried to break through - 128, 310, 294, 286th rifle, 3rd and 4th 1st guards, 21st tank divisions, 1st separate mountain rifle, 16th and 122nd tank brigades, two corps artillery regiments. While the Soviet troops were breaking the blockade, striking along the coast

149

Lake Ladoga, to the south, the Germans advanced to Tikhvin, imposing an external noose.

To eliminate the enemy breakthrough in the Tikhvin direction, the Headquarters allocated four divisions from the Leningrad Front, three from its own reserve and one from the reserve of the North-Western Front.

Two rifle divisions from the 8th and 42nd armies - the 80th and 281st - were transferred by aircraft. In stormy weather, the Ladoga flotilla transported the 191st, 44th rifle divisions and the 6th separate marine brigade from the western to the eastern shore of the lake - about 21 thousand people, 129 guns, more than a hundred tanks, vehicles, tractors and about a thousand horses. Troops, disembarking from the ships, were immediately sent to the forward positions and immediately entered into battle. The 92nd Infantry Division arrived in Tikhvin, and the 60th Tank Division began unloading. The 310th and 4th Guards Divisions were transferred from the 54th Army to the Tikhvin direction. The 259th Rifle Division of the North-Western Front advanced to the line of the Malaya Vishera River. At the same time, the Headquarters demanded that active operations be continued in the Sinyavino direction.

Arriving formations, without completing the concentration, immediately rushed in parts to counterattacks. They did not achieve much success, but by October 28, the troops of the 4th separate army suspended the enemy offensive 40 km southwest of Tikhvin, and the 52nd army east of Malaya Vishera.

At the end of October, according to Fedyuninsky, at his own request, he was transferred from the post of commander of the Leningrad Front to the 54th Army. General Khozin accordingly led the front.

October 28, 1941 is considered the date of completion of the Sinyavino offensive operation of the 54th Army and the Neva Operational Group. The official losses of the Soviet troops amounted to 55 thousand people. The date is sucked from your finger: supposedly on that day the operation had to be stopped "because of the difficult situation in the Tikhvin direction". What happened after that has no name.

150

cost, although the "conveyor" on the Nevsky "patch" worked continuously with increased "productivity", and everyone also went on the attack, but already under the leadership of Fedyuninsky, division of the 54th army.

There were good reasons for this.

In the second half of October, the Germans found themselves near the walls of Moscow, the remnants of three Soviet fronts were destroyed in giant "boilers" near Vyazma, Mozhaisk and Maloyaroslavets fell. A state of siege was introduced in the capital, enterprises, the diplomatic corps and government institutions were evacuated from it, the population fled in panic. Before Stalin visibly loomed the prospect of moving from a habitable Kremlin office to a bunker in the vicinity of Kuibyshev. Under these conditions, the command of the Leningrad Front received on October 23 specific instructions from the Supreme Commander: in three days, by all means, break through the blockade and withdraw troops, even if Leningrad had to be sent for this.

"If you don't break through the front within the next few days and don't firmly restore ties with the 54th Army, which connects you with the rear of the country, all your troops will be taken prisoner. The restoration of this connection is necessary not only in order to supply the troops of the Leningrad Front, but especially in order to give the troops of the Leningrad Front an outlet to the east in order to avoid capture, if necessity forces the surrender of Leningrad ...

Either you will break through the front during these three days and give your troops the opportunity to withdraw to the east if it is impossible to hold Leningrad, or you will all be taken prisoner. Concentrate eight or ten divisions and break through to the east. This is necessary both in the event that Leningrad is retained and in the event that Leningrad is surrendered. For us, the army is more important. We demand decisive action from you."

Vasilevsky on the same day explained to Khozin even more frankly: "Please note that in this case we are talking not so much about saving Leningrad, but about saving and withdrawing the armies of the Leningrad Front." Thus, Stalin made the "Kutuz decision" - to save the army, and mining

151

Leningrad was quite in the spirit of the Patriotic War - the French in 1812 also set fire to Moscow.

General Fedyuninsky did not cope with the task, although he threw "to the east" - to the Tosnensky line and the Nevsky "piglet" - 8 rifle divisions and 4 brigades. General Khozin took up the matter with zeal. On October 30, the command of the 8th Army, headed by General Shevaldin, was ordered to redeploy to Ozerki, receive the troops of the Neva Operational Group, and continue crossing the Neva. Together with them, the 281st, 191st, 80th (former 1st DNO) and 85th (former 2nd DNO) rifle divisions departed. On the Oranienbaum bridgehead, the Primorsky task force was formed under the command of Major General A.N. Astana, which included the 48th Kalinin Rifle Division (on the front from Porozhki to the Gulf of Finland, it alone replaced six divisions, that is, here the Soviet troops for the first time organized a real, and not

active-fictitious defense), the 2nd and 5th brigades and the 3rd marine regiment, the 519th howitzer artillery regiment and the 287th tank battalion.

On November 2, Shevaldin and Okorokov were summoned to Smolny: "We will break through the blockade of Leningrad," said Lieutenant General Mikhail Semyonovich Khozin, the new commander of the front troops, "moreover, where the Nazi command least expects this, from the bridgehead to bank of the Neva. Commander-8, who was not imbued with the beauty of the authorities' plan, proposed his own plan, based on the elementary rules of military affairs: in the old place, near Nevskaya Dubrovka, to conduct demonstrative actions, to dull the enemy's vigilance, to concentrate forces in another area and suddenly cross the river in a new direction.

However, Khozin rather abruptly interrupted General Shevaldin's speech: "There can be no question of any delay, or any extension of the training period. Delay will give the fascist command the opportunity to withdraw part of the troops from near Leningrad to reinforce

152

Tikhvin group. Did Mikhail Semyonovich really think that a strike from the only bridgehead, around which battles had been raging for a month and a half, the approaches to which were seen through and through by the enemy, was the place where the Germans "waited least of all"? Or maybe it would be better to wait until the enemy begins to withdraw troops, and then go on the offensive? But the front commander knows nothing about the enemy. Yes, and he doesn't have any general thoughts, where can they get from a person who drinks a bottle of vodka every day and sincerely considers this a "normal phenomenon" - only a glint in his eyes, a canine readiness to immediately obey the Master's order and report with a joyful squeal about your zeal. Therefore, it was decided to start the operation the next day.

In the "unexpected place" by this time, five rifle divisions were concentrated - 86, 115, 265, 168, 177 and 20 divisions of the NKVD. On the western bank of the Neva, the 10th Rifle Division, the 11th Rifle Division, the 123rd Red Banner Heavy Tank Brigade and the 4th Naval Brigade lined up. One of the memoir generals complains that in the tank brigade of Major General V.I. Baranov "there were only 50-60 obsolete BT-7s," but, according to the archive of the Ministry of Defense, the brigade was called "heavy tank" and was almost 100% equipped with KV-1 vehicles. True, there were still no tanks on the bridgehead: the Germans quickly burned the seven "batushki" transferred with incredible difficulties. Cerebral means were not enough. There were many guns, but the shells were spent according to the established daily norms, like bread rations. All divisional, army and front artillery and all artillery commanders were on the right bank, the commanders of rifle formations on the left. Communication between the army headquarters, artillery, rear and "piglet" was carried out through a single telephone cable laid along the bottom of the Neva to the command post of one of the divisions. Therefore, 15 minutes of firing in

153

White light. To the right of the bridgehead, the Germans created a stronghold in the village of Arbuzovo, to the left - in the buildings of the 1st Gorodok and in the impenetrable reinforced concrete blocks of the 8th hydroelectric power station (in September it was handed over to the Germans almost without a fight, now it has turned into a fortress, which the Soviet troops stormed two years), there was an anti-tank ditch in front, of course, once ours, and the nearest target was the Figurnaya grove.

At noon on November 3, fresh regiments of the 168th division, Major General A.L., went on the offensive. Bondarev together with units of the 86th and 177th divisions. It was not possible to suppress the firing points of the enemy artillery: as soon as the Soviet infantry went on the attack, the Germans met it with dense machine-gun and mortar fire from the front and flanks. The regiments were melting before our eyes, the attack bogged down.

"... it was very hard on my soul," recalls General S.N. Borshchev, who was then head of the operational department. "After all, we have lost the best people, hardened in battles, and the task is not

fulfilled.

When one of the staff workers began to complain about the difficulties of attacking from an open "patch", where neither maneuver nor a flank attack could be used, the divisional commander, looking at him intently, said in an even, calm voice:

- Nevsky "piglet" is marked with Comrade Stalin on the map. Do you think people at Headquarters understand less than you?

Talking among ourselves, we tried to find mistakes and omissions of regimental commanders, criticized ourselves for poor exactingness, but in the depths of our souls we understood that none of us was guilty of anything, just as those commanders of units and formations who tried to pro- tear the enemy defenses here before us.

Guilty, one must think, damned fascists.

Bondarenko, a literate general, understood perfectly well that under the leadership system that had developed in the Red Army, one should not be smarter than the authorities and no one needed his ability to maneuver and cover the flanks, but only unquestioningly obey and show "good faith".

154

vivacity". The army commander also quickly got his bearings: on the morning of November 4, he called the division commander and ordered him to personally lead the regiments into the attack. Bondarenko, "reinforced" by four tanks thrown across the river at night, led, all day trying to break through to the Figurnaya grove and even broke into the anti-tank ditch. The battle of the division was controlled by nachooper Borshchev:

"About ten minutes later, the commander of the army called. Reporting to him the situation, I said that the attack had bogged down. [Lieutenant General interrupted me:

"I order you to personally punish the commander of the 402nd regiment, the commander of the battalion advancing in the first echelon, and the tankers who did not complete their combat mission!"

"Comrade lieutenant general," I answered, "there is no one to punish. The commander of the third battalion, senior lieutenant Vorobyov, died a heroic death, dragging the fighters into the attack, the tanks were hit and burning, the tankers, apparently, died. And the regiment commander Yermakov is a hero..."

To all my insistent demands to suppress the firing points in the Figurnaya grove and repeat the artillery attack on the 8th hydroelectric power station, the head of artillery of the army, Colonel S.A. Krasnopevtsev replied that the entire supply of shells allocated to us to ensure today's offensive had been used up and that he was in no way able to help us. Convinced that there was nothing more to expect from artillery cover, Bondarev, fearing to lose all the people, ordered to stop the attacks, leave the anti-tank ditch and retreat to their previous positions.

A day later, the commander of the 168th division again personally led the fighters into the attack.

And the commander of the 86th division, Colonel A.M. Andreev, also personally ...

The 177th Infantry Division of Colonel GI fought nearby. Vekhina (already killed once in the Luga "cauldron" and re-formed at the direction of Moscow from the remnants of the 10th Infantry Brigade and personnel of the air defense regiments). She's exactly the same for days without success

155

attacked the German fortifications in the forehead and suffered heavy losses.

On November 5, in the formations-veterans "piglet" there were: in the 115th rifle division - 82, in the 86th - 61, in the 265th - 60 active bayonets. The 177th Infantry spent twenty days on the bridgehead. During this time, they managed to equip one dugout and lose all the personnel.

On the Tikhvin direction, the 4th Army, having received reinforcements, | November launched a counterattack with the forces of three infantry and one tank divisions in the general direction of Budogoshch, Gruzino with the task of restoring defenses at the turn of the Volkhov River. She was unable to complete this task. The divisions that arrived from Leningrad had neither artillery nor transport and entered the battle only with small arms. The connections acted at different times and inconsistently. The enemy, having repulsed all the attacks, after which 700 remained in the 44th Rifle Division, and about a thousand fighters in the 191st, resumed the offensive on November 5. On the evening of November 8, the 12th Panzer Division of General Harpe and the 18th Motorized Division of Major General Gerrlein, sweeping away advice on their way, entered Tikhvin, which ski parts on was not defended by anyone. The Germans managed to cut the communications of the Fedyuninsky army and the only railway line, along which cargoes went to Lake Ladoga to supply Leningrad. Soviet losses were estimated at 20,000 Red Army soldiers taken prisoner, 179 captured guns, and nearly 100 tanks destroyed.

Five days later, a meeting of the chiefs of staff of the German army groups took place in Orsha. The decision adopted at it said: "The question of providing food for large cities is insoluble. There is no doubt that especially Leningrad should be destroyed by famine, because it is impossible to feed this city. Field Marshal von Brauchitsch, concerned about the morale of the German soldiers, who were supposed to suppress the attempts of the civilian population to leave the doomed "center of Bolshevism" with machine guns, proposed to withdraw the troops altogether,

156

and to block all exits from the city with extensive minefields: "If the Red troops in the region of Leningrad and Kronstadt lay down their arms and are taken prisoner, then the commander-in-chief sees no reason to continue the blockade of the city. Troops must be redeployed to their places of permanent deployment. And in this case, the sick part of the population will die, but at least

not before our eyes."

The ease with which it was possible to achieve the goal gave rise to such extraordinary pleasantness in the minds of the German command that it became quite seriously interested in the headquarters of the 39th motorized corps in the possibility of making a 400-kilometer march to Vologda, more than once exchanging for all sorts of trifles. General Haller wrote in his diary: "... the enemy reacts extremely weakly to our attack on Tikhvin. He probably doesn't have any more reserves."

General Meretskov, commander of the 7th separate army, was the first to get worried and "reacted", having received information that the Germans were coming to his rear. There was no connection with Yakovlev, the Headquarters did not have specific information. Therefore, on November 5, Meretskov sent his chief of staff to the combat area of the 4th Army and quickly found out that the situation near Tikhvin was rather gloomy.

The defeated headquarters of General Yakovlev, without controlling anything, retreated to the east in separate groups that had no connection with each other. The right-flank formations of the 4th Army (285th, 310th, 311th, 292nd Rifle Divisions, two battalions of the 281st Division, 6th Marine, 16th Tank Brigade, 883rd Corps Artillery Regiment), exposing 60 kilometers front, retreated to the area of Volkhov and Kobona under the leadership of the Chief of Staff of the Army, Major General P.I. Lyapin. And this Lyapin did not rack his brains over how to close the 60-kilometer gap formed in the front or cling to an advantageous line, but was carried away by organizing a retreat and evacuating the rear. He drove the trains with material reserves so far that in the end

157

they had to be searched for with the help of front-line aviation, and the soldiers on the front line ended up without ammunition and food. The remnants of the 44th and 191st rifle divisions retreated to

north along the road to Lodeynoye Pole. The remaining formations of the army were scattered east and south of Tikhvin.. ^.

On November 7, General Meretskov reported to Moscow on the current situation and received an order: urgently go to the 4th Army, take temporary command of it, at the same time acting as commander-7, and the standard task: "Stop and defeat". The 46th tank brigade, a rifle regiment, four mortar and two engineer battalions were urgently sent from the 7th Army to the Tikhvin area. On the evening of November 8, Meretskov, with a group of officers, arrived in Sarozha, 22 kilometers north of Tikhvin, where he met his new subordinates who continued to withdraw: "Upon learning of our arrival, officers began to gather in the canteen where we arrived. The mood of our interlocutors was depressed. Almost all of them retreated through Tikhvin. But no one could really explain how the city was surrendered. According to them, he was captured suddenly. Units and subunits that lost control even on the outskirts of Tikhvin passed the city without stopping in it. Having captured the city, the enemy, also without stopping, launched an offensive to the north - to the Svir River and to the east - along the Itossa and the railway to Vologda. The main forces of our retreating troops also grouped in these directions. Here are the few pieces of information that we managed to find out in the evening in the dining room... One of the commanders offered to talk to the soldiers to find out their mood. So they did. The fighters spoke out reluctantly, but quite frankly complained that frosts had set in, and they were still in summer uniforms, that they had run out of ammunition and had nothing to shoot with, that the German aviation was doing what it wanted, but our planes were not visible, that the German tanks go and go, but they don't even have grenades, our guns are silent ... "

In short, the 4th Army did not exist as a single fighting body.

158

On the same day, an extremely unpleasant conversation with Comrade Stalin took place between Zhdanov and Khozin:

"You have been given a period of several days. If you do not break through to the east within a few days, you will ruin the Leningrad front and the population of Leningrad ... You must choose between captivity, on the one hand, and sacrificing several divisions and making your way to the east in order to save your front and Leningrad... I repeat, there is little time left. Soon you will be left without bread. Try to single out groups of hunters from different divisions, the most courageous people, make up one or two consolidated regiments and explain to all of them the significance of the feat that is required of them in order to clear the way. It is possible that the consolidated regiments of brave people will pull the rest of the infantry along with them. All. If you do not agree or have any doubts, tell me directly.

Brilliant! How did we not stomp ourselves (Khozin's expression)! All you need is two regiments of heroes. The leaders of the defense of Leningrad were well aware that captivity would not shine for them, even if they really wanted to. Only a bullet in the back of the head - from the vigilant guardians of the bodies.

Stalin also advised to transport heavy HF across the Neva in disassembled form, unfortunately, without explaining who and how would assemble them in hell on the left bank. And since the artillery still shoots blindly, and there is neither time, nor skill, nor desire to conduct reconnaissance, it is best to work by area: select one square kilometer and concentrate on it the fire of all available guns and rocket launchers.

"The military council of the front not only has no doubts, but completely agrees with you and will not stop at any measures for a minute," Zhdanov assured the Leader of the Peoples.

To accomplish the feat, literally within a day, they formed three regiments of 2,750 people from the communists, at the head of each they put a division commander and "sacrificed" them with ease, without any doubt. 600 guns and 120-mm mortars were piled up against the kilometer-long breakthrough zone.

159

On the morning of November 10, the First Shock Communist Regiment of Lieutenant Colonel N.A. crossed over to the "piglet". Vasilyeva. An hour later, the regiment went into battle, came under heavy enemy fire, by evening it had no more than 500 fighters. On November 11, the Second Shock Regiment arrived and immediately rushed to the offensive with the support of the depleted 168th and 177th rifle divisions. And again they ran into an anti-tank ditch of "domestic production". A day later, the Third Regiment and 8 BT tanks were thrown onto the bridgehead, ordering all divisions and headquarters to attack simultaneously in the direction of the Sinyavin Heights. After these assaults, out of the three commanders of the shock regiments, only the commander of the Third Communist Major General P.A. remained alive. Zaitsev, the surviving "brave people" were poured into Bondarev's division. Over five days of fighting, Soviet losses amounted to more than 5,000 people.

"A long month will pass," writes S.N. Borshchev, during which we, exhausted by hunger and battles, experiencing an acute need for shells and ammunition, will go every day to storm enemy fortifications until we receive the long-awaited, stunningly joyful news of the defeat of the Nazi troops near Moscow".

November 15 General L.A. Bondarev was recalled from the Nevsky Go "piglet" and appointed commander of the 8th Army instead of Shevaldin. However, for those who remained on the bridgehead, this did not change anything. Although seven divisions and two rifle brigades had already huddled on the left bank of the Neva, it was possible to transport heavy tanks (the river finally stood up, and by November 18 the thickness of the ice reached 8-10 cm), the task of breaking through the enemy defenses or at least taking possession of the grove "Figured" remained unfulfilled.

At the end of November, the 1st Infantry Division replaced the German paratroopers on the Neva.

In order to give at least some sense to the massacre on the "patch", in which about 1000 Soviet soldiers died daily, our historians in uniform talk at length about some "significant forces of the Nazis" that they managed to tie down, and the "damage" inflicted on twelve German di

160

visions. By listing these enemy units, no one quite consciously makes it difficult, since the division has always been one, it's just that the Germans regularly changed their units for rest and replenishment.

The optimist Okorokov also clarifies that in the battles "... our military personnel grew and strengthened. All those who fought on the Neva, from privates to military leaders, gained invaluable combat EXPERIENCE."

This is how Yu.I. gained combat experience. Smolensky: "In October we moved to Neva Dubrovka, crossed on boats and pontoons. Days and nights began on the Nevsky "patch", merging into one endless battle, as a result of which six active bayonets remained from the battalion. I was wounded in the head, my left eye was knocked out, and during the ice drift, on a boat that delivered food, I returned to the right bank. You could say lucky." And the entire 3rd battalion, and the entire 330th rifle regiment of the 86th division with "grown up and strengthened military personnel" remained lying in the trenches plowed up by German artillery. Exactly in twenty days, the 177th division melted away, at the end of November only its headquarters, commanders and regimental commissars were removed from the plandarm.

Yes, the experience is truly invaluable. Only no one needed him, as well as the knowledge of military leaders. CONCLUSIONS from these "experiments" are embarrassed to draw even today.

"Whoever has passed death near Dubrovka is born a second time" - that's the whole soldier's experience. And finally, here is the soldier's opinion, which in Soviet times was not interested in any military publishers (and today they are not too interested if it does not coincide with the general's): "If the Germans filled our headquarters with spies, and the troops with saboteurs If there had been a mass betrayal and the enemies had developed a detailed plan for the collapse of our army, they would not have achieved the effect that was the result of the idiocy, stupidity, irresponsibility of the authorities and the helpless humility of the soldiers ... The meanness of the Bolshevik building. How, in peacetime, arrests and executions of the most

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161

hard-working, honest, intelligent, active and reasonable people, the same thing happened at the front, but in an even more open, disgusting form ... The most honest people who felt their responsibility to society perished. There was a stupid, senseless killing of our soldiers.

To the south, "experiments" continued on six divisions of the 55th Army (43rd, 85th, 90th, 70th, 125th, 268th), who, with the support of the 123rd KV tank brigade and two tank battalions, tried to capture Ust-Tosno and the cursed moat. An identical picture was observed here: heroism without shells, exactingness instead of reconnaissance, a tribunal instead of competent preparation and organization of interaction.

The 85th Rifle Division of Major General Lyubovtsev was advancing along the Kirovskaya railway to Ust-Tosno. "The offensive, if you look at it from the side, was impressive and, perhaps, intimidating," recalls the former commander of the 103rd Infantry Regiment, S.M. Bar din. - Through our heads, with a howl and whistle, shells flew and there, beyond the river. Tosnoy, in the camp of the enemy, they roared with a roar, lifting up pieces of frozen earth mixed with snow. The front line of the Germans was enveloped in a continuous cloud of thick smoke. All this was clearly visible to us, it was even more exciting. We quickened our pace. |

In those moments, none of us thought of anything but the upcoming battle. One thing was on my mind: win it! With each meter passed, the excitement increased, because the enemy was silent. So, he was stunned, pressed to the ground by artillery fire. Surely there were direct hits at the location of the Nazis.

I looked at my fighters with hope. Almost three thousand armed people, I believed, could crush everything in their path, go to the cherished opposite bank of the river and invade the enemy's disposition. And some people have already crossed the ice barrier and started throwing grenades. "Spoke", settling behind a tubercle on

162

shore, and one of our machine guns. But at that very time the artillery preparation ended and it became quiet. The silence was frightening. She seemed to have bared us. I turned around, looked at the ranks of the advancing and was horrified: the bulk of the fighters were still in the middle of the path. And at this time, enemy large-caliber shells flew into the ranks of the advancing. The Nazis, as it turned out later, opened massive artillery fire from the right flank. They fired fiercely, simultaneously from several batteries. It turned out disastrous for us that no one interfered with them: neither our artillery, nor aviation. The enemy artillery attack happened so unexpectedly that we were at a loss. In an instant, the harmony of movement was broken. Commanders and soldiers who had already believed in their victory began to die under enemy fire.

Almost all nine companies were covered with enemy shells. The area was covered in smoke. Above the swamp was a deafening roar. The cries of commanders and the cries of the wounded were barely audible.

I looked in a daze at the rows of companies being shot, at the bodies of the dead flying up with the ground, at the wounded writhing in pain. Chills seized me. The attack bogged down in an instant. The regiment began to melt before our eyes ... The idea came to contact the artillery regiment and ask them to suppress the enemy's batteries. But they answered me that the shells had not yet been delivered, and those that were used up during artillery preparation.

On the other hand, they have gained combat experience, the cadres have grown and strengthened.

"Having learned about the tragic offensive in the neighboring division," writes Colonel V.K. Zinoviev, - in a conversation with Lieutenant Colonel Senkevich, I disapproved of the preparation and implementation of

such inefficient operations. Yan Petrovich looked at me with narrowed eyes and did not answer. Shortly after my conversation with Lieutenant Colonel Senkevich, General Bogaychuk summoned me. After saying hello, he bluntly asked:

163

"Are you saying, Comrade Zinoviev, that operations involving the use of strike units are being planned and carried out incorrectly?"

I realized that my opinion on this issue was reported to the general by the chief of staff. Being confident in his rightness, he answered:

"Very wrong, Comrade General. That would be to collect all the shock parts in one fist! And Krasny Bor would not have resisted ...

The general looked into my eyes with interest, and then said:

"Look, Comrade Zinoviev, at my map. Perhaps this is how our forces should be used? Do you find such a fist on my map?"

I was shocked. My decision was reflected on the General's card...

"That's exactly what I think," he murmured.

"So, Comrade Zinoviev! We graduated from the same academy. Here are our solutions. But no one asks for our opinion. And this is dictated by a very difficult situation. Everyone is trying to get rid of the blockade and hunger as soon as possible. Few people think about academic decisions. This, of course, is a tragedy. But in this tragedy there is also a positive. We don't give the Faggists a rest. We have not retreated a single step, but on the contrary, we are trying to win back from them ...

After this conversation with the general, I began to treat him with even greater respect. He began to ask sometimes, looking at me: "How would you decide at the academy?"

To be precise, these are the Germans - the 122nd and 121st infantry divisions, being the defending side, did not retreat a single step

The fighting went on around the clock. In the 55th Army, they also selected daredevils for feats. Every night, the so-called blocking groups of 10-12 people went to the front line. Armed with grenades and machine guns, they were called upon to destroy enemy pillboxes, which were unable to neutralize the Soviet artillery. Of the blockers, few remained in
alive.

164

And in the morning, infantry with guns at the ready again attacked the German machine guns. The tanks that arrived from the Kirov Plant got stuck in a quagmire, not reaching the front line, and if they did, they could not overcome the anti-tank ditch, they were knocked out, and the evacuation of armored vehicles to the rear became a new concern, otherwise the enemy would turn them into new firing positions. points.

From the report of the 70th Infantry Division dated November 5: "Two block groups have been formed with three tanks with armored sleds, ten submachine gunners, five sappers. The 252nd and 329th regiments with block groups tried to destroy the bunker on the southern outskirts of Ust-Tosno. Tanks are lined with fire to the wire. The infantry lay down under artillery and mortar fire in front of the barbed wire. By November 18, the 70th division had: in the 252nd regiment - 42 active bayonets, in the 329th - 70, in the 8th - 130 bayonets.

From the report of the chief of staff of the 90th Infantry Division, Colonel Tsukanov: "The experience of previous battles showed that the method of using our forces at the present time did not give the desired results,

therefore should be revised. Parts of the division suffered heavy losses without completing their assigned tasks. The opposing enemy, the organization of defense were not taken into account, fire weapons were not specified. Hence the blind attack. They tried to compensate for the ambiguities in the situation by introducing large forces into battle, which was not justified by the situation and led to heavy losses and disruption in command and control.

Again D.V. Ivanov: "On November 27, a new order was received from the army headquarters: "268th SD to seize the anti-tank ditch, make passages for tanks, take possession of the sheds at the 12.7 mark." The attack, designed for surprise, did not bring success: our regiments were too few in number, the fascist machine-gun and rifle fire was too well organized. Ours approached the moat at 50-100 m, but there were 10-15 people left in the rifle platoons, and there was no one to attack.

From the report of the 268th Rifle Division: "The 76-millimeter guns of the 1930 model could not destroy

165

enemy firing points. During the attack, the OTs were alive and opened heavy fire on the attackers. The assigned three tanks could not overcome the anti-tank ditch.

If the "introduction of large forces into battle" can be called ineffective, but still a "method of using" forces, then how can we explain the lack of at least somehow equipped positions with shelters for personnel on our side: absolute indifference to life soldiers, military illiteracy or a continuous "offensive impulse"? The Germans in any occupied territory tore off an extensive network of deep trenches, machine-gun nests, dugouts with two or three rolls, with heating and furniture, kneaded clay and laid it all out with bricks, used railway rails and even captured rubber to strengthen pillboxes. Some of these structures have survived to this day. The Red Army soldiers sat in small cells under fire from all types of weapons, not being able to relieve themselves or receive rations during daylight hours. (For this comfort, the Red Army soldiers especially hated the Fritz, but they never missed a chance to "trophy." The writer Daniil Granin said: "When we first took the German dugouts, we found hot coffee there. I remember how we were outraged: a thermos with hot coffee and a roll of toilet paper! We had no idea what toilet paper was - we couldn't even wipe ourselves with newspapers, because newspapers were needed for rolling cigarettes. From the first day of the war, we experienced the humiliation of our poverty. "I will add from myself that is toilet paper, the Soviet Army never found out.)

Former commander of a separate ski battalion A.F. Zabara was surprised at the thoroughness of the Fritz: "Jumping into the ditch, I saw an enemy firing point located right in front of our tunnel... I draw your attention to how the firing point is arranged. It is lined with small sandbags. The bags, like bricks, are stacked one on top of the other, forming not only a parapet, but an embrasure in the parapet, through which the fascist machine gunner fired at our positions, and he practically

166

remained invisible. Meptochki top sprinkled with snow, firing point merges with the terrain, with a snow-covered field.

I have never seen anything like this... They know how, bastards, to fight!"

Having at their disposal the largest factories of the country, our fathers-commanders did not even attempt to create at least something resembling a real defense, they did not know how to... fight.

Here, for example. CM. Bardin takes positions at the 86th SD:

"...we went to take over the defense area, which is actually located in a swamp. The dugouts turned out to be low, with a thin, unreliable ceiling. They saved people only from bullets. Even the most

a small mine pierced them through and through. This section was constantly fired upon by the enemy from mortars, heavy machine guns and machine guns. In such unreliable conditions, the units occupying the defense all the time suffered losses.

This description refers to December 1941, despite the fact that 70% of the losses our units suffered from enemy artillery fire. And 60 years later, the search engines immediately determine the difference by eye.

From the army war diary: "During the operation to clear the west coast, the headquarters of the units and rifle divisions showed their helplessness and poor control."

A change in commander followed, and the 55th Army was taken over by Major General V.P. Sviridov. However, the tactics did not change: the front headquarters demanded the continuation of the offensive, and frontal infantry attacks on the enemy's unsuppressed firing points continued. The losses of the army in November amounted to more than 20 thousand people. There were 70-80 bayonets left in the regiments. The report of the 268th Rifle Division dated December 1 reads: "138 people remained in the division. fighting the division cannot lead.

"To develop success in the direction of the Mga station" did not work out.

167

It sounds paradoxical, but it turns out that the German divisions, which did not let the troops of the Leningrad Front out of the ring with their steadfastness in defense, saved the city and its population turned into a powder keg from complete annihilation.

Until November 9, the 54th Army tried to take Sinyavino. It was not possible to advance even a meter, so General Fedyuninsky, who took command on October 26, does not recall a word about this operation and his participation in it. Meanwhile, the 21st Infantry Division of General Shponhaymer reached the Volkhov Hydroelectric Power Station - "the enemy extended its bloody paw to this brainchild of the Soviet people, to this monument to the genius of Lenin." Parts of the 8th Panzer Division were also aiming here from Tikhvin. As soon as the Germans traveled another 30 km from Volkhov to Novaya Ladoga, the 54th Army found itself in a "cauldron". On November 12, the Headquarters assigned responsibility for the defense of Volkhov to Fedyuninsky, transferring to him the formations of the Lyapin task force. The "Monument to a Genius", the Volkhov aluminum plant, bridges, if the city was abandoned, were about to be destroyed.

General Meretskov and his officers gathered units of the 4th Army that scattered across the forests and roads, put them together into organized detachments, searched for commanders, established communications and supplies for the troops, and set specific tasks. To the north of Tikhvin, the remnants of the 44th and 191st rifle divisions were found, the commanders of which, having no guidance, could not decide what to do next: "They were very happy to see the general in front of them and stopped the argument." In the Vologda direction, there were only two rifle regiments with a total number of 400 people, but already on November 11, trains with a full-blooded 65th rifle division of Colonel P.K. arrived at the Bolshoy Dvor station from Transbaikalia. Koshevoy. On the way were two separate tank battalions.

South of Tikhvin, from Mulev to Vorozhba, the 27th cavalry and 60th tank divisions were defending. Meretskov

168

did not fail to note that the latter had only 70 "obsolete T-26 tanks with low cross-country ability." Something new. What is surprising is not the fact that most of our military leaders, in one way or another, directly or indirectly, make it clear that German equipment in the initial period of the war was both the newest, and better armored, and burned more reluctantly - this is a common thing. But I have never heard that German and Czech tanks, with all their other advantages, could boast of increased cross-country ability. .

Even further south, in the area of Nebolcha, "were holding back the onslaught of the enemy's motorized division" units of the 4th Guards and 92nd Rifle Divisions. All three groups acted independently and separately. Nevertheless, by constantly counterattacking with available forces and suitable reserves, General Meretskov managed to stop the further advance of the enemy in the period from 11 to 14 November. The Germans retreated to Tikhvin and began to build defenses around the city: stone buildings were adapted for firing points, trenches were dug on the outskirts, and mine and wire barriers were installed. Two days later, Field Marshal Leeb suggested that the General Staff of the OKH leave Tikhvin altogether. However, General Halder demanded that the city be held at all costs. At the end of November, in order to free up mobile formations, the 61st Infantry Division was transferred to Tikhvin, partly by air, partly under its own power.

At the same time, the Volkhov direction was recognized as more promising, where it was decided to additionally send units of the 254th Infantry Division. She, along with the 11th, DL and 191st Infantry Divisions, was to be part of the Beckman group, which was tasked with capturing the settlement of Shum and the Voybokalo station on the Mga-Volkhov railway line. General Fedyuninsky, having at his disposal the 3rd Guards, 128, 294, 286, 198, 115, 80, 311, 285, 292, 281, 310 rifle, 21 tank divisions, 1 mountain rifle and 6th naval, 16th and 122nd tank brigades, managed to repel this blow.

169

Thus, the offensive of the German troops in the second half of November was stopped. German attempts to break through Tikhvin to the Svir River, as well as through the Volkhov and Voybokalo to Lake Ladoga failed. Their plan to unite with the Finns and completely blockade Leningrad remained unfulfilled. The Soviet troops, having lost more than 40,000 men killed and wounded, exhausted the enemy's strike force, which stretched up to 350 km at the front with unsecured flanks. This: the operational position of the enemy troops favored the transition of the Soviet troops to the counteroffensive in order to throw back the shock formations of Army Group North to the starting line - beyond the Volkhov River, to ensure the uninterrupted operation of the section of the railway along which cargo was delivered to Ladoga. To top it all off, the German troops, who were counting on a quiet winter in Moscow and Astrakhan, were "unexpectedly" hit by an early and harsh Russian winter: the soldiers did not have warm uniforms, mass frostbite began, automobile and tank engines did not start, and the guns froze. recoil

,liquid. All preparations for combat operations in winter conditions were reduced to painting helmets white and sending divisional supplies to Deutschland to collect warm clothes from the population.

The Red Army had to go over to the counteroffensive, as usual, urgently and without preparation. Marshal K.A. Meretskov writes: "... The difficult situation in Leningrad and the insistent demands of the Headquarters to release Tikhvin as soon as possible forced a transition to decisive action. Therefore, we had to give the order to go on the counteroffensive before we received materiel and reinforcements.

The idea of the operation was to inflict several blows in converging directions on Kirishi and Gruzino. The 4th Army delivered the main blow from the Tikhvin region with the task of linking up with the troops of the 54th Army in the Kirishi region and with the troops of the 52nd Army in the Gruzino region. From to

170

The next to interact was the Novgorod army group advancing on Selishche.

The armies went over to the offensive separately by separate regiments and divisions as they were ready, or rather, to varying degrees of unpreparedness. Therefore, until the end of November at the OKH headquarters, these hostilities took place under the heading "attacks of local significance."

So, on November 10 north of Novgorod, the Novgorod army group (305th, 180th rifle, 3rd tank, 25th cavalry divisions) launched a counterattack, on November 12 north and south of Malaya Vishera - the 52nd army (288, 259, 111, 267 rifle divisions). The offensive of the Novgorod group against the 250th Infantry Division, commanded by General Munes Grandes, bogged down immediately. The Spaniards, although they initially impressed the disciplined Germans as a "gypsy camp" (Baron von Rissenbeck described how, on the way to the front, "in Gravenfer they tried to sell weapons and horses. Crazy bunch!"), They turned out to be brave warriors, showing "outstanding fighting qualities and readiness for self-sacrifice."

The troops of the 52nd Army of General Klykov, who were opposed by units of the 126th Infantry Division of General Lauks, only on November 18 managed to break through the ob-. crown of the enemy and only on November 20 they captured Malaya Vishera. The Soviet army commander, organizing the offensive, had no idea about the creation of shock groups. His four divisions attacked in a "chain" on a 48-kilometer front; Malaya Vishera, well fortified by the Germans, was stormed head-on by two regiments of the 259th division. Until the end of November, the Klykovites managed to advance 10-15 km, then the enemy brought the 215th Infantry Division into battle.

On November 19, the 4th Army went on the offensive (4th Guards, 44th, 191st, 65th, 97th Rifle, 27th Cavalry, 60th Tank Divisions, 46th Tank Brigade, 120th efficient tank battalion), seeking, with the support of 608 guns and mortars, by flank attacks of their northern and southern operational groups under the base of the Tikhvin ledge, to intercept the communications of the group

171

the enemy, and with frontal attacks by the fresh division of Koshevoy to drive the enemy out of the city.

The Germans everywhere offered stubborn resistance and attacked themselves in a number of sectors.

In the zone of the 54th Army, Khozin and Zhdanov, who did not lose hope of pleasing the Leader with success, decided to conduct a separate "very interesting and capable of bringing a quick decision operation." The essence of the idea was to take advantage of the ice cover established on Ladoga and the forces of one rifle division with a ski regiment without heavy weapons to strike from the side of the lake towards the troops attacking from the Nevsky "patch". Commander of the 80th Infantry Division, Colonel I.M. Frolov received a verbal order from the front commander and a day to prepare for the operation, the beginning of which was scheduled for November 23. A few hours before the start of the offensive, the divisional commander dared to express doubts about the successful outcome of the general's undertaking and was immediately removed from his post. The operation was postponed for a day, a new commander, Major Brygin, was sent from Leningrad. The details of this "ice campaign" have not been preserved, it is only known for certain that it failed miserably, as Frolov predicted. Major Brygin was seriously wounded in battle and died in an ambulance on the way to Moscow. Colonel I.M. Frolov and Commissioner K.D. Ivanov was accused of treason and disruption of the operation to break the blockade, was tried and, with Stalin's personal approval, was shot.

By this time, from Lake Ladoga to Lake Ilmen, 28 Soviet divisions and 6 brigades were operating against fourteen Germans - about 300 thousand soldiers and commanders, 2120 guns and mortars, 200 tanks. The enemy forces were estimated at 130 thousand people, 1000 guns and mortars, about 200 tanks and assault guns. The numerical superiority of the Red Army was balanced by the lack of ammunition, the need to act exclusively along the roads, the age-old "as soon as possible" and "at any cost", the inability of commanders to resolutely concentrate forces in the main direction, and so

172

or "our lack of a clear organizational structure of the troops."

How it looked near Tikhvin was described by Marshal P.I. Koshevoy:

"Several artillery shots were fired from our side. The shells exploded in the enemy's trench. This, as they explained to me, was artillery preparation. Then three red rockets flew in the direction of the enemy, and four or five tanks with landing troops entered at medium speed on the road indicated by them in a column with an interval of 25-30 m.

I confess that neither before nor after such an attack of tanks with a landing force, I have not seen, although I went through the whole war. As soon as the BTs were noticed by the enemy, artillery fire was opened on them. A minute later, the lead tank caught fire. The landing infantry scattered across the field and lay down. The rest of the tanks stopped, reversed, and at top speed went back into the forest. The enemy pursued them with fire.

There was a noise in the forest. Someone reproached the tankers with choice words. They weren't in debt. As a result, tanks with landing forces in the same formation again appeared on the ill-fated road, but without artillery preparation for the attack: there were no shells for it. Everything repeated from the beginning. Two more tanks went up in flames; The landing force, having lost several men, scattered across the field. The rest of the cars turned back ...

My heart and mind protested against the method of attack that I had witnessed. This was not the way to attack and prepare the battle. Neither the preparation nor the assurance of success were thought through. Soldiers and equipment were thrown to be devoured by the enemy, they suffered unjustified losses and did not achieve the slightest positive result. No one really controlled the fight. It seemed that none of the commanders properly thought about the fact that a living and not a dead warrior wins."

As in the Malovishersky direction, formations of the 4th Army stubbornly went into frontal attacks on enemy

173

strongholds without trying to find weaknesses in the enemy's defenses or to make an outflanking maneuver. For example, the northern and eastern operational groups stormed the Smychka and 1st May state farms for five days, respectively, until they decided to bypass them. In addition, having a three-fold superiority over the enemy in artillery, the attacking side distributed it evenly along the entire front of the semi-encirclement, managing to achieve an operational density of 3-4 barrels per kilometer. The fighting was still conducted blindly, with "unseeing eyes". The gunners, not receiving intelligence data, fired at random and only at the front line.

The head of the army artillery tried to involve aviation in the adjustment of fire - a technique known since the First World War, but received a surprising answer from the representative of the Air Force: "For our pilots, this is an unusual business." The only reconnaissance squadron was armed with MBR-2 single-engine seaplanes with two machine guns and a cruising speed of 160 km/h. Being easy prey for German fighters and anti-aircraft guns, they could not fly during the day and were used

'exclusively for night bombing. But in this capacity, judging by the reports of the political departments, they inflicted terrible damage on the enemy, putting the Germans in whole regiments. This is how the newspaper "On Guard of the Motherland" famously described the actions of the 41st Squadron in November: |

"The squadron crossed the front line at night and broke into the rear of the enemy, where the Germans felt safe. Enemy convoys were with burning headlights. The villages set on fire by the Germans burned brightly, illuminating the whole countryside far and wide. The detachments of enemy infantry marching along the roads were clearly visible from above.

Here our pilots cleared up, our gunners-radio operators had fun. Destroying tanks, vehicles, batteries with bombs, our planes switched to strafing flight and sprayed the rushing hordes of the enemy with machine-gun jets. The destruction was complete. The enemy fled in different directions, leaving thousands of corpses. And the squadron, having exhausted its combat

174

supplies, returned to her airfield for new cargo. This burden she also brought down on the heads of the enemy.

In the morning, the entire personnel of the squadron rejoiced.

It is impossible to imagine that a raid on Lyuban is described here by four flying boats capable of lifting six 100-kg bombs into the air. It's a pity that the Red Army didn't have such a "formidable"

technology.

Surprising is the fact that all four years of the war the Soviet ground forces cursed the German "frames" and "crutches", which did not give rest either on the front line or in the rear. And for all this time, our generals never ordered such machines from the Soviet aircraft industry. When the army needed a front-line bomber, the designer Petlyakov "designed" it in a month, drawing blueprints of the Me-110 long-range fighter purchased in the Reich. In the same "safe" there was also documentation on the twin-body FV-189, but it was only after the fall of Berlin that they got their hands on it. Until the end of the war, the correction of artillery fire from the air remained an unusual thing for the Stalinist "falcons".

In the course of the Tikhvin operation, it also became clear that in the rifle subunits, which relied entirely on the "gods of war", who constantly complained about the lack of ammunition, the ammunition for company and battalion mortars remained unused. As our historians explain, it turns out that the battalion commanders underestimated the effectiveness of mortar fire (although there was an opposite opinion about German mortars), and most importantly, they did not know how to use them. Mortar companies had to be withdrawn from battalions, mortar batteries from regiments, reduced to mortar battalions and mortar divisions, and used centrally under the guidance of more trained comrades.

Soon, despite another directive from the Headquarters of November 24, ordering to build on the emerging success and defeat by joint efforts "the entire enemy grouping east of the Volkhov River", and the arrival of Marshal Kulik from Moscow to help Meretskov, and without that

175

the advance of the Soviet troops completely stopped, averaging 5-8 km. Moreover, as early as November 27, General Halder believed that the offensive of the Beckman group against Shum was developing quite successfully, and only on November 30 did an entry appear in the diary: "Now it becomes more and more obvious that the offensive we launched against Shum was a mistake. The main blow of the Beckman group should be directed at Volkhovstroy. An appropriate order has been given." But it was too late. The front briefly froze six kilometers south, southeast of Volkhov and directly at the Voybokalo station, and on December 3, the 54th Army, having received heavy KV tanks from Leningrad, transported across the ice of Lake Ladoga, launched a counterattack on the left flank of the group "Beckman. The troops of the shock group, which included the 311th, 285th, 80th rifle divisions, the 6th marine brigade and the 122nd tank brigade, were tasked with reaching the Kirishi area and cutting off the enemy's escape route. The Germans fiercely resisted, relying on a system of platoon and company strongholds created in villages and towns, on heights and at crossroads.

On December 5, having regrouped, concentrating the main forces on its left flank and having received replenishment of people and ammunition, Meretskov's army continued the offensive. The Soviet troops advanced very slowly. The turning point came only on December 7, when the left-flank formations of the 4th Army broke through the enemy defenses west of Tikhvin and, having reached Sitomla, created a threat to intercept the only communication of his Tikhvin grouping. It coincided with the transition of the Red Army to the counteroffensive near Moscow. The 191st and 65th rifle divisions came close to Tikhvin, firing positions were taken by 200 guns and two battalions of guards mortars. "The enemy is carrying out massive artillery raids on the city,"

said General Halder. "Our troops are physically overworked. This condition is aggravated by frosts reaching 30-35 degrees. Of our five tanks, only one can fire." In the 8th Panzer Division

176

vision there were 28 officers, 146 non-commissioned officers, 750 soldiers.

On December 8, the German command decided to evacuate Tikhvin and withdraw its troops to a distance "from which it is possible to influence artillery fire on the city." On December 9, after a brutal night assault, Soviet troops entered Tikhvin.

The victory was immediately announced by the Soviet Information Bureau: "In the battles for Tikhvin, the 12th tank, 18th motorized and 61st infantry divisions of the enemy were defeated. The Germans left over 7,000 corpses on the battlefield. The remnants of these divisions, dressed in peasant clothes and abandoned their weapons, fled in the forests in the direction of Budogoshch. Large trophies have been captured, which are being counted. Interestingly, from the same message Stalin's "brothers and sisters" learned for the first time that Tikhvin had been captured by the Germans "ten days ago". By the way, both the 12th Panzer and 18th Motorized Divisions, as well as the rest of Schmidt's corps formations (and General Arnim who replaced him) had already been "destroyed" once in the message of the Soviet Information Bureau dated August 22, along with completely mythical ones in 1941 11th and 30th SS divisions. And yet, this time they got it: in the Tikhvin adventure, the 18th motorized division lost almost 9,000 soldiers, 741 went to Volkhov Human.

There is also little left of the 65th Rifle Division of Koshevoy.

On December 15, with the introduction of two fresh divisions into battle (the 115th from Leningrad and the 198th from the Karelian Isthmus), the offensive of the 54th Army began to develop more successfully. Its troops, advancing 20 km, reached the Olomna area, covering the left flank of the enemy's Volkhov grouping. At that time, units of the 4th Army captured its right flank. The divisions of the 52nd Army stormed Bolshaya Vishera.

On December 16, Hitler approved the proposal of the command of Army Group North on the withdrawal of German troops across the Volkhov River, which was supposed to be completed by December 22. The Germans "scattered" systematically, holding rear communications in their hands, leaving strong rearguards.

177

in the strongholds, which the Russian infantry stormed for a long time and bloody, mining roads and blowing up bridges (according to the mind, our units should have blown them up during their retreat). Just as near Moscow, the enemy, even "in a peasant dress" and "abandoning his weapons", was nowhere to be surrounded or cut off.

On this day, "with great pain," the commander of Army Group North reported to Hitler by telephone that Tikhvin would have to surrender. The Fuhrer agreed, but insisted on holding positions west of the city. In essence, there was a slow push of the German units beyond the Volkhov. This is recognized by General Fedyuninsky, who called the main drawback "our inability to carry out an energetic and daring maneuver to bypass and cover enemy settlements. Therefore, in a number of cases, the struggle for these points dragged on. The 291st Infantry Division of General Herzog was transferred from the Oranienbaum region to reinforce the 1st Army Corps. The pace of the Soviet offensive slowed down significantly.

General Halder, who closely followed the events in the northwestern direction,
noted daily:

"The departure from Tikhvin is being carried out in perfect order. The materiel was taken out entirely. We managed to organize the supply of fuel. Russians do not provide resistance ... At the front of the group

of the "North" armies, local battles are going on, which do not interfere with the calm and planned withdrawal of our units on the Volkhov sector of the front.

On December 17, the Headquarters formed the Volkhov Front under the command of General of the Army K.A. Meretskov. It included the 4th and 52nd armies, as well as the newly formed 59th and reserve 26th, soon renamed the 2nd shock. On the 52nd Army and the 4th, which was headed by Major General P.A. Ivanov, the task was to pursue the retreating enemy. 59th Army Major General I.V. Galanin and the 2nd shock general-lieutenant of the NKVD troops GG Sokolov advanced to Volkhov from the formation areas. The right flank of the new front ran north of Kirishi, the left flanked into Lake Ilmen. How

178

Although Meretskov insisted that the Fedyuninsky troops operating side by side be transferred to him under his control, at the request of Khozin and Zhdanov, the 54th Army remained part of the Leningrad Front. The commanders of the two fronts, as our sources have been saying for a long time, were tasked with defeating the enemy grouping that had reached Lake Ladoga in the Mga region and lifting the blockade from Leningrad.

In fact, in the euphoria of the Moscow victory, Stalin ordered to encircle, "capture, and in case of refusal to surrender, exterminate" the entire Army Group North at once.

The main role was assigned to the Volkhov Front. His troops were to clear the entire territory east of the Volkhov from the enemy, cross the river on the move and defeat the German divisions defending on the western bank. Then, during the offensive in the north-western direction, it was necessary to encircle and destroy the enemy operating near Leningrad. The main blow was delivered in the center, in the direction of Gruzino, Siverskaya, Volosovo, Luga, deeply bypassing Leningrad from the south. The 59th (366, 372, 374, 376, 378 and 382nd Rifle, 78th and 87th Cavalry Divisions, two tank and six ski battalions) and the 2nd Shock (327th rifle division, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 53rd, 57th, 58th, 59th rifle brigades, two tank and six ski battalions) of the army. Right-flank 4th Army (4th Guards, 191st, 44th, 65th, 377th, 92nd, 310th Rifle, 27th and 80th Cavalry, 60th Tank Divisions, 46th Tank Brigade, three separate tank battalions) were to advance in the general direction towards Kirishi, Tosno and, in cooperation with the 54th Army of the Leningrad Front, encircle and destroy the enemy who had advanced north of Mga to Lake Ladoga.

For General Fedyuninsky, this was a completely new task. Throughout the autumn, his army was advancing in a westerly direction, trying to connect with the units fighting on Nevsky "patch". Now the troops of the 54th Army should have shifted their efforts in the southeast on

179

rule, to the Tosno-Lyubani region, leaving the defenders of the left-bank bridgehead left to their own devices (the remnants of the Soviet formations were withdrawn to the right bank of the Neva, they were replaced by the 10th Infantry Division).

At the same time, the commander of the 52nd Army, with units of the Novgorod operational group passing under his control, was ordered to defeat the Novgorod grouping of the enemy and liberate Novgorod. At the second stage, it was supposed to bring into action one more general army and 18-20 ski battalions. The right-flank 11th Army of the Northwestern Front was assigned the task of striking in the direction of Staraya Russa and cutting off the Germans' escape routes from Novgorod and Luga. The Primorsky Group of the Leningrad Front was to go on the offensive in a southwestern direction with the release of airborne assault forces and ski detachments in order not to allow enemy units that did not want to be captured to drape through Narva.

Thus, the plan was based on the idea of developing the counteroffensive of the troops of the Volkhov Front, Leningrad and North-Western Fronts into a powerful strategic operation with the participation of over 80 settlement divisions, during which it was planned to introduce new forces and means into combat operations and completely defeat all troops. Field Marshal Leeb. .

German intelligence was closely monitoring the situation. Exactly ten days after the signing of the Directive of the Headquarters, the radio interception service recorded the appearance of a large headquarters in the Volkhov sector, "which, apparently, should take over the overall leadership of the enemy's offensive." Interestingly, for those Soviet commanders who had an idea about radio equipment, a sure sign of an upcoming enemy attack was a sudden radio silence; for the Germans, the increasing activity of "secret" negotiations about "cucumbers", "boxes" and "pencils".

On December 21, the 4th Army liberated Budogos. The next day, its advanced units reached the Volkhov South,

180

Encountering no resistance, the full-blooded 372nd Rifle Division of the arriving 59th Army reached the river, and within two days it was exterminated by its own division commander, you can't say otherwise. Nachfin of the 372nd regiment N.F. Kazantsev recalls how experienced commanders, having carried out reconnaissance, suggested, without delay, bypassing the enemy through a poorly guarded area in a night raid and defeating him in the morning with blows from the front and from the rear. But the division was not commanded by them, but "who went through the school of the Civil War, who had the practice of leading regiments and formations" (this is according to the general's memoirs), before the army he worked as a collective farm foreman (soldier's memoirs) Colonel N.P. Korkin.

"The division commander did not agree and ordered to dig in until the morning," says Kazantsev. "Then he gave the order to advance at 12 noon on the forehead without artillery preparation, and our division on the river. Volkhov put on 50%. After that, the division withdrew to its lines... In this battle, our Siberian division suffered a complete rout. About 4,000 comrades-in-arms remained dead on the Volkhov ice, and we were unable to bury them. Two thousand wounded were sent to hospitals. The commanders, political workers and soldiers devoted to the Motherland were wonderful.

On December 20, 1941, we received an order to withdraw our division to the rear for formation. In essence, we did not fight, but shamefully retreated to the rear. At 12 midnight a new division arrived, occupied our lines, and we withdrew into the forest, 3 km from the front line. Here the division commander, Major Korkin, made another mistake, ordering not to move until the morning. Despite the protests of the regimental commanders, the divisional commander categorically forbade the withdrawal from the front line until the morning, saying that "the Siberian division cannot shamefully withdraw, stealthily, at night. Our soldiers are steadfast, courageous, not cowards, laughing (!!!), will go with the front line openly, marching, only during the day. (A collective farmer, no doubt!) On December 21, 1941, the division commander called all the regimental commanders and ordered them to march in columns along the highway to the Glad, where reinforcements would be received. At 10 am our division

181

moved. The division commander, led by the headquarters, regimental commanders and commissars, on horseback, led the division on a march from the front line. The regiments marched in a common column in broad daylight. The Germans discovered this and sent 3 bombers and 2 fighters to start bombing us. And the column kept moving along the highway, and not a single officer gave a command to escape, although there was a forest on both sides. Apparently, the planes ran out of ammunition, they became quite insolent, descended low and began to "crush" us with their skis. "Save yourself!" - finally shouted some officer from the anti-aircraft gunners who were standing in the forest. First, separate groups, and then everyone poured into the forest. Korkin was removed from his post in order to give him another division two months later. In the end, in the eyes of the authorities, it is not the commander who senselessly loses people that is bad, but the one who, pitying the soldiers, dares to have his own judgment and orders

bosses to discuss. | On December 22-26, German troops took up defensive positions on the western bank of the river. The Soviet units managed to capture three small bridgeheads north of Gruzino and in the area of the mouth of the Tigoda River, which, due to their small size and open terrain, could not serve to build up forces and further develop the offensive. Attacks to expand these bridgeheads did not achieve their goal. In turn, the Germans managed to retain two significant bridgeheads: near Kirishi and Gruzino. By December 28, Fedyuninsky's army had pushed the enemy behind the Mga-Kirishi railway line. . By the end of December, the German divisions found themselves at the line from which they began their attack on Tikhvin. The plan of the German command to completely isolate Leningrad failed. Through traffic was restored along the Northern Railway to the Voybokalo station, and from there to the transshipment base on Ladoga. German losses were great. The troops of the three Soviet armies in the offensive phase of the Tikhvin operation lost 49 thousand people killed and wounded, 70 tanks, 2293 guns and mortars, 82 aircraft. The figures can be considered underestimated already

182

because they do not take into account the losses of the 59th Army. By the way, depicting caricatured Germans in women's headscarves freezing in the Russian frost, our propaganda, of course, was silent about the fact that all this time Meretskov's troops, with the exception of fresh Siberian divisions, fought in summer uniforms.

The failure of the German offensive on Tikhvin was a heavy blow for the Finns as well. "They hoped," writes Tippelskirch, "that at Lake Ladoga there would be a unification of German and Finnish forces and, as a result of this, the complete encirclement of Leningrad, which would soon lead to the fall of the city and make the Finnish front on the Karelian Isthmus redundant. The failure of the German plans, among other things, worsened the position of the Finns also because, in anticipation of a quick and decisive victory over the Soviet Union, which they were striving for with all their might, they mobilized everyone capable of bearing arms. This affected the country's economy so hard that the Finnish command was forced to dismiss a large number of people from the army and merge a number of units. By the spring of 1942, 180 thousand people were released from the front. To all sorrows, on November 28, London presented Helsinki with an ultimatum demanding to stop hostilities against the USSR, and on December 6, on the day of Finland's independence, England declared war on the Finns.

Commander Meretskov, during the Tikhvin operation, made a thoughtful conclusion: "The experience of the battles also showed that the troops must undergo special training for operations in an unfamiliar (?) and difficult climatic and geographical location."

The Headquarters demanded to continue offensive operations without an operational pause and to overcome the line of the Volkhov River as quickly as possible. However, echelons with units of the 2nd shock and 59th armies began to arrive in the area of Malaya Vishera only at the end of December. The rear and artillery lagged behind. Not content with directives, on December 29 the Kremlin sent a known

183

nogo "customized" the corps commissar L.3. Mekhlis, who delivered Stalin's personal letter to Meretskov:

"Dear Kirill Afanasyevich! The case that has been entrusted to you is a historic matter. The liberation of Leningrad, you understand, is a great thing. I would like the forthcoming offensive of the Volkhov Front not to be exchanged for small skirmishes, but to result in a single powerful blow against the enemy. I have no doubt that you will try to turn this offensive into a single and general blow against the enemy, upsetting all the calculations of the German invaders. I shake your hand and wish you success. I. Stalin.

But the new front did not have the strength for a single and common strike. In the first days of January, it became obvious that it would take several more days to concentrate the reserve armies. The breakthrough did not work out on the move, the enemy thoroughly entrenched himself behind the river and organized a fire system.

The deadline for going over to the offensive was postponed to January 7, 1942.

Smolny continued to show activity. "We will fight brutally in all areas ..." Zhdanov and Khozin reported to the Leader.

Therefore, the 8th Army stubbornly attacked Arbuzovo and Roshu "Figured" from the Nevsky "piglet". Finally, the front commander agreed to the proposal of the Military Council of the Army to launch an auxiliary attack ten kilometers north of Nevskaya Dubrovka. On December 25, the 4th Separate Marine Brigade made an attempt to force the Neva in this place. However, the attempt was not successful, as well as the offensive in the main direction. German historians carefully calculated that from November 15 to December 27, the Russians attacked in small battle groups 79 times, up to two companies - 66 times, in a battalion and above - 50 times. When repelling 16 tank attacks, 51 tanks were destroyed. By mid-December, 1,500 people were taken out of action by the 1st Infantry Division.

The 55th Army, which received the immediate task of capturing the village of Krasny Bor, the Ulyanovka station, and then about

184

move to Tosno, still trampled along the anti-tank ditch.

Over the past three months, the Germans erected on both sides of it three rows of barbed wire and slingshots, minefields, and many firing points. The settlements of Putrovo, Yam-Izhora, Krasny Bor, Feklistovo, Nikolskoye, located on a hill, were turned into powerful strongholds and fired from them with artillery and mortar fire at Kolpino, Ponton, Saperny, where Soviet batteries, headquarters, and medical battalions were located.

On December 7, the 125th Rifle Division managed to briefly capture 500 meters of the ditch. Of the 180 people in the ranks, 17 remained.

On December 18, a fresh ski battalion under the command of Senior Lieutenant A.F. broke into the anti-tank ditch with a sudden night attack. Zabara, but only lasted until the morning. "On the morning of December 18," recalls Colonel V.K. Zinoviev, "the fascists set up a real barrage of fire around the occupied section of the ditch and threw their elite units of cutthroats at our ski battalion. The ditch was abandoned. But the "guilty" in this has not been found. He was in

hospital...

And again, as before, the ditch passed from hand to hand. At night we will drive out the Nazis, and during the day they will capture it again. The fate of the ski battalion sharpened in me a long-born feeling of dissatisfaction with what is happening with our strike units. Just think! On December 11, we sent senior lieutenant Zabara from the front to Leningrad to form a ski battalion, and a week after that, the army command threw an untrained and uncohesive unit into battle. Even earlier, the same thing happened in the neighboring division. To the left of us, closer to the Neva, the shock unit advanced on enemy positions with the support of tanks. But the terrain there was swampy, and the tanks got stuck before reaching the target, and the attackers were stopped by enemy artillery fire. It turned out that the blow was delivered not with a powerful fist, but with spread fingers.

On December 20, the 268th Rifle Division, supported by the 84th Separate Tank Battalion, went to storm the moat. The Soviet infantry drove the Germans out of the trenches and reached the outskirts of Krasny Bor, but the blow did not develop. "Our regiment was supposed to advance in the second echelon," writes Lieutenant Colonel D.V. Ivanov, - but due to poor reconnaissance of enemy firing points, the course of the battle changed. The 942nd regiment was the first to break through the German defenses in the anti-tank ditch. The introduction of the 947th joint venture ensured the development of a breakthrough along the front and the consolidation of a bridgehead behind the moat. But there was nothing to develop the further success of the offensive. The command did not introduce the army reserve until our division took possession of the northern outskirts of Krasny Bor. The enemy managed to create here

a powerful line of defense, arranged firing points in most of the houses, and all attempts to enter Krasny Bor were unsuccessful. The division suffered heavy losses ... "

The next night, the enemy again took possession of the moat, and on December 21 the 125th Rifle Division again went on the attack, again captured the section of the moat in front of Krasny Bor and held it for two days. On December 22, a division commander, Major General P.P., was killed by a direct hit by an artillery shell on a forward observation post. Bogaichuk.

No matter how hard seven Soviet divisions (72, 43, 70, 268, 85, 56, 125th) tried to "distract" two enemy divisions with daily attacks, at the end of December the Germans withdrew part of their forces - the 409th regiment of the 122nd 1st Infantry Division and the 407th Regiment of the 121st Division - to Volkhov. Positions south of Kolpino were occupied by the 1st Regiment of the SS Police Division (almost simultaneously, the positions near Peterhof were abandoned by the 29th Infantry Division). This circumstance allowed the 55th Army to occupy and secure a section of the moat from Yam-Izhora to the Oktyabrskaya railway. During the battles for the anti-tank ditch, only in the last ten days of December, the army lost 25,234 people.

The enemy retreated two kilometers to Krasny Bor. 125th Rifle Division, which was received by Major General I.I. Fadeev, immediately received an order to capture this small but well-fortified village.

186

Stubborn battles for Krasny Bor began. They turned out to be unsuccessful: as before, the infantry went to the unsuppressed firing points; there was no interaction with tanks; replenishment was introduced into battle on the move and died.

"At the end of December, a very large offensive began on Krasny Bor," recalls P.A. Chugui. — Two companies of the 84th battalion took part. They advanced to the left of the Oktyabrskaya railway. A swamp, behind it is an anti-tank ditch. The sappers made a passage through the ditch, but it turned out to be too narrow for the HF. The tanks got stuck, the infantry suffered very heavy losses. Krasny Bor remained with the Germans. Only the sanitary losses of the 55th Army in December 1941 amounted to 41.6%, thus, more than half of its composition was knocked out in a month.

The 42nd Army, according to the reports of the headquarters of the Leningrad Front, either "put itself in order", then resumed the offensive "with the same task."

All these feverish attacks with the aim of breaking the blockade as soon as possible had another reason - HUNGER. Although this circumstance can in no way justify the mediocrity of performance.

As a result of a number of miscalculations by the city leadership and the military command, the people of Leningrad found themselves in a tragic situation. Until the end of the summer of 1941, no practical steps were taken to evacuate the population and accumulate food supplies. In June and July, many thousands of tons of grain were transported from the Baltic States by rail, not to Leningrad, but to the east. Moreover, food was exported from the city. At the direction of Zhdanov, trains headed for the western regions in accordance with the mobilization plan turned back. At the beginning of July, an attempt was made to unload Leningrad from unnecessary "mouths". About 200 thousand children were taken to the regions of the Leningrad region, but less than a month later they had to be hurriedly re-evacuated back. In July-August, 164,000 people left the city for the east, mostly workers of enterprises scheduled for evacuation.

187

and members of their families. Of course, most ordinary citizens could not then imagine that the Germans would be at the very walls of Leningrad, but A.A. Zhdanov and M.M. Popov should have shown more foresight.

General N.N. Voronov noted: "To my surprise, the city continued to live for a very long time.

calmly. One might have thought that the battles were unfolding on the near approaches: to Berlin, and not under the walls of Leningrad. The evacuation of the population has not yet begun. Here they clearly underestimated the threat that was approaching the city.

Only the NKVD department dealt seriously with the issues of evacuation, but Dzerzhinsky's heirs solved their narrowly specific task: to clear Leningrad of the "counter-revolutionary and hostile-minded element." Deportation to Omsk, Novosibirsk, Krasnoyarsk and the sunny regions of Northern Kazakhstan was subject to 95 thousand people of Finnish and German nationalities, as well as Socialist-Revolutionaries, Trotskyists, nobles, Harbinites, thieves and other prostitutes and enemies of Soviet power. However, these plans could not be implemented within the established time frame. .

As a result, at the moment when the blockade closed, 2.8 million civilians, including over 100,000 refugees, found themselves in Leningrad and its suburbs. At least 1.2 million belonged to the category of "non-active population", of which about 400 thousand children. Food stocks, based on the norms introduced on July 18, were available for about a month. There was still no centralized control over food stocks, which were held by numerous organizations; restaurants were still open and goods were sold at commercial prices.

The chairman of the Leningrad executive committee P.S. On September 6, Popkov reported to the State Defense Committee that there was very little food left in the city, and asked to expedite its delivery. But all land communications were already cut. On September 9, a decision was made on the builder

188

port facility in Osinovets Bay on the western shore of Lake Ladoga, near the terminus of the suburban railway. It was assumed that through this port it would be possible to take out capital equipment from Leningrad, deliver food and other supplies to the city. By the end of September, Osinovets had to pass twelve ships daily. However, attacks by enemy aircraft, as well as autumn storms, greatly hampered the measures designed to reliably connect Leningrad with Bolyn land. The Germans actively bombed Osinovets, the Novaya Ladoga cargo dock on the southern side of the lake, and everything that could float on the water. Many tugboats and barges were sunk in the first weeks after the opening of the Ladoga waterway. In addition, the autumn navigation was very short and ended on November 15th. During this period, 45,000 tons of food, 45,000 rifles, | a thousand machine guns, more than 108 thousand mines, as well as two rifle divisions and a marine brigade with a total strength of 20 thousand people. Evacuated - 33.5 thousand inhabitants. The products were obviously not enough, they were spent almost immediately. And it didn't make sense to bring large supplies into the city, which had been turned into a "powder keg" and, from the point of view of the Kremlin leadership, doomed.

Since November 16, Leningrad could only be supplied by air. For this, 50 Douglas transporters and 10 TB-3 aircraft were allocated, loaded with pressed meat, combined fat and concentrates (special air groups were formed much earlier, but they were engaged in transporting exclusively military cargo). They were covered by the 127th, 154th and 286th Fighter Regiments. The supply of food by aviation did not satisfy even a fifth of the needs of the front and the city. From September 12, workers received 500 grams of bread a day, employees and children - 300 grams, dependents - 250 grams. The norms were consistently cut | October and November 13, and on November 20, the largest reduction in food rations of all time was carried out: workers were entitled to 250 grams of bread, all

189

the rest - only 125. This surrogate "product", half consisting of cotton and flax cake, bran, cellulose, moldy flour, could be called bread only conditionally. Relying on the cards meat and fats were not issued at all.

The ever-living Ilyich, who gave answers to all questions, from the distribution of the lottery to the study of the electron, did not leave his faithful followers without recommendations here either. "When it comes to the distribution of food, it is impossible to think that it is necessary to distribute only fairly," explained V.I. Lenin, — but one must think that this distribution is a method, an instrument, a means for raising production. It is necessary to give state food support only to those employees who are really needed in conditions of the highest labor productivity, and if food products are distributed as an instrument of politics, then in the direction of reducing those who are not absolutely needed, and encouraging those who really needed." In the category of "not absolutely necessary", doomed to starvation, in accordance with the precepts of the leader of the world proletariat, employees, the elderly and children who "do not increase production" were identified. Only a third of the population had work cards.

In an effort to find a way out, the Military Council of the Leningrad Front proposed to organize a road on the ice of Ladoga. Stalin sanctioned the proposal, although he was skeptical about it, as "unreliable" and of no serious significance. The route was tested on November 22, when the ice thickness reached 18 cm. During the first two weeks of operation, 126 vehicles were lost under German bombs on insufficiently strong ice. The fall of Tikhvin and the enemy's exit to the Voybokalo station put Leningrad on the brink of disaster. Stalin, putting an end to the city, ordered the Leningraders to form five motor transport battalions with full refueling and the best drivers and transfer them to the Supreme High Command, at the same time the Douglasses were recalled to Moscow. At the end

190

From December to early January, no food was delivered to Leningrad at all, and shops did not open.

The truly legendary Military Highway No. 102, known as the "Road of Life", began to function only from mid-January 1942, after the Germans were defeated near Moscow, Zhdanov's visit to the Kremlin, and the "Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR on helping Leningrad food" and the restoration of the railway and blown up bridges between Tikhvin, Volkhov and Voybokalo.

At the same time, the mass evacuation of the civilian population began.

By this time, tens of thousands of inhabitants had already died, the main cause of death was alimentary dystrophy, that is, starvation. In November, according to the NKVD Directorate, 11,000 people died of starvation; in December, almost 53,000; in January, despite an increase of 50-100 grams of bread, 97,000 people. Cases of deaths on the streets, attacks on shops, murders and robberies of citizens in order to take possession of ration cards multiplied. During the same period, 413 cases of cannibalism were recorded, the real hunt was for children. People went crazy, lost their human appearance. B. Mikhailov, one of the doomed under the blockade, wrote: "The blockade is the moral and physical disfigurement of a person, his soul and body. No, not to an animal, but to some kind of degenerate, mental freak, all thoughts and actions of which are narrowed down to the size of a ration, a piece of duranla, a handful of khryapka. How is it possible, for example, to convince a mother that she is capable of killing and eating her infant! And they told me this, and I believe ... I do not regret that I was born in such hard times. I do not regret that fate threw me into the very, very acute war. Offer now a choice - I would go the same way, with the exception of the BLOCKADE. In front of her, without hesitation, I will choose death.

The Soviet Information Bureau did not hang about the famine in Leningrad, but used the "plot": just in January, having told about "bleeding, swelling from the

191

yes, the population of Germany dying from diseases" (and before that it was claimed that all of Europe was working for them).

At the same time, the highest party and Soviet functionaries - "by right" - did not consider it shameful to order granular caviar, rum women and Viennese pastries. One of the grassroots commissars, who visited Smolny on business in the winter of 1942, wrote:

"I was ready to see a lot of bread and even sausage there. But there were cakes!

First Secretary of the Leningrad City Committee A.A. Kuznetsov, at a meeting of the bureau, persuaded the party nomenklatura "to enter into the position of citizens of the city", emphasizing, "after all, we eat better, we sleep in warmth, and our linen is washed and ironed, and we are in the light." "Really needed" included high-ranking agitators such as the court playwright Vsevolod Vishnevsky, who "loved speaking to the people" with passionate hysterical speeches and eating steaks with white bread - solely in the interests of the cause, obeying party discipline and the decision of the Political Directorate of the Fleet, - in front of his wife dying of dystrophy.

The two realities and their inhabitants existed in parallel, intersecting only at rallies and meetings, at which the well-fed explained to the hungry their duty to the party and the Soviet Motherland. The meaning of the reports of city services and headquarters is terrible, set out with dry bureaucracy and bureaucratic cloth of language: "Cleaning dystrophics on the streets of the city (collected 9207 people)".

The city on the Neva was also in the information blockade established by the native Soviet authorities. So dense that the workers and personnel of defense plants who were taken out of Leningrad in the summer of 1941 envied those who remained. Leningraders, who had eaten all the crows a long time ago, exterminated and dried cats and rats for future use, invented recipes for cooking dishes from leather, carpentry glue, and it's hard to imagine what else, received letters from across the Volga with complaints about the poverty of life in evacuation and requests to send chocolates.

192

In addition to food shortages, there was a catastrophic shortage of fuel in Leningrad, coal and oil reserves ran out at the end of September, and the firewood harvesting plan approved by the City Executive Committee was fulfilled by 1%. In October, residential buildings were left without electricity and central heating, and most of the factories stopped. In November, trams stopped running, and in December the water supply and sewerage systems froze. The lack of food, light, heating was supplemented by German air raids and continuous artillery shelling. Over 10,000 shells and almost 68,000 bombs fell on the city during the three autumn months. As a result, 3,840 people were killed and 14,000 wounded. Judging by the fact that the southern side of the streets was considered safe, the Finns did not shell the city, and it was the fear of the Finnish "long-range guns" that became the official reason for unleashing the "winter war" in [939.

The food supply of the front inevitably worsened, and the rations of the soldiers also had to be cut. The Red Army norm of bread at the front line was 500 grams, in the second echelon - 300. Once a day, a portion of soup was given out. The fighters were out of shelters around the clock, which they did not bother to build in the everyday life of endless attacks, and suffered from malnutrition and frostbite. On December 1, 1942, the number of patients increased to 12,604, and on February 1, to 13,719 people. By spring, as a result of acute vitamin deficiency, many developed scurvy and "night blindness", at dusk on the front roads one could often see processions reminiscent of the famous painting by Pieter Brueghel: one sighted soldier slowly led a string of others.

The absence of tobacco greatly undermined morale. "Smokers just went crazy," recalled Yuri Nikulin, "and everyone painfully thought where to get at least one cigarette. Regretted how carelessly they smoked in

193

Peaceful time". The commanders were sometimes given thin cigarettes, mixed in half with leaves, called, you might guess, "dystrophics."

The Leningrad famine was largely due to the organizational miscalculations of the Soviet bureaucracy, which had no habit of taking care of the population, the Bolshevik conviction that "distribution is a method of increasing production", and widespread theft. Without any blockade, the soldiers of the Kalinin, Don, Stalingrad and other fronts starved and died in 1942 from dystrophy.

Chapter 6

EVACUATION OF HANKO (November 1941)

In November 1941, the Baltic Fleet carried out an operation to evacuate Hanko (Gangut), a naval base rented from Finland at gunpoint, which made it possible to control the northern part of the entrance to the Gulf of Finland. The land defense of the peninsula consisted of two defensive lines blocking the 22-kilometer isthmus. The coastal defense sector had several railway and stationary batteries with guns ranging in caliber from 305 to 45 mm. The air defense consisted of two 76 mm batteries and 11 fighters. The protection of the water area was carried out by seven sea hunters. On the peninsula was the 8th rifle brigade of Colonel N.P. Simonyak, reinforced by an artillery regiment, an anti-aircraft artillery battalion, tank and engineer battalions. The total strength of the garrison was 27 thousand people with 114 guns and 50 T-26 and T-37 tanks. Shortly before the war, Major General S.I. Kaba- NOV.

To capture the Soviet base, the Finns formed the Hanko strike group as part of the 17th Infantry Division with reinforcement units and an artillery grouping, numbering 153 guns.

On the night of July 1, they tried to seize the peninsula with a sudden assault, but were repulsed. Later on on

195

The isthmus, well fortified by both sides—three Soviet defensive lines and four Finnish lines—was hardly fought, the struggle was reduced to systematic artillery shelling and small landings on the islands adjacent to Hanko.

In August, the 46th separate rifle battalion numbering 1100 people arrived from Paldiski at the disposal of General Kabanov, and the 219th rifle regiment was formed from the sapper battalion, engineering units and rear units. Now the 8th brigade was equal in strength to the rifle division. On September 7, the garrison of the island of Osmussar, numbering about a thousand people, went under direct subordination to the base commander. General Kabanov was tasked with preventing the enemy fleet from breaking through the Central mine and artillery position into the Gulf of Finland and diverting as many enemy forces from the Leningrad Front as possible by stubborn defense. If we discard the patriotic songs of Glavpurov's narrators about "mass heroism", well-organized party political work, and that "the title of "Gangutets" inspired terror in the enemy", then the result will remain bare: both tasks had no solution. .

Firstly, no "Tirpitz" and "Yarnhorsts" were rushing to Kronstadt and were not going to. Let us again refer to the opinion of Admiral N.M. Sobolev: "The laying of a large minefield by a few in the Baltic testified that they did not intend to break into the Gulf of Finland, they were saving large ships for operations in the Atlantic. Thus, the creation of a mine artillery position at the entrance to the Gulf of Finland did not make sense. Once again, we were captured by the template."

Secondly, it is difficult to imagine how the Soviet garrison locked up on the peninsula could divert large forces from Leningrad. Indeed, already in August, most of the 17th Finnish division was transferred to the Karelian Isthmus, and one infantry regiment and several field batteries remained in the Hanko area, coastal batteries, border guards and separate

196

battalions. The intensity of shelling and air operations has significantly decreased.

Finally, after four months of siege, it became clear that there was no point in holding Hanko. The fleet could not use the peninsula as an operational base, the Central Mine and Artillery Position lost all significance after the abandonment of Tallinn, the impending freeze-up put the garrison in a hopeless position - a complete encirclement with cut off communications. On October 23, the Headquarters of the All-Union Command decided to leave the peninsula.

Soviet losses for 165 days of "heroic defense" amounted to 797 people killed and about 1200 wounded, the losses of the enemy were "huge". Almost 28 thousand slaughterhouses and commanders from the Hanko Peninsula and Osmussar Island were subject to evacuation.

The evacuation plan provided for two stages: at the first stage, several detachments of ships were to take out parts of the second echelons, rear, equipment and food supplies, at the second - the troops of the front line of defense. The materiel and objects not subject to evacuation were to be destroyed. In view of the drowning during the "successful" Tallinn breakthrough of most of the mobilized transports and the initial absence of special ships in the fleet, it was decided to carry out military transportation on warships. The route of almost 140 miles between Gogland and Hanko was recommended to be overcome at night, since fighter cover was not provided for at the transition.

The leadership of the operation was entrusted to the commander of the light forces detachment, Vice Admiral V.P. Drozda. General Kabanov was responsible for covering the withdrawal of troops from defensive lines, boarding ships, and removing the garrison from Osmussar Island. An emergency rescue team was deployed on Gogland under the command of I.G. Svyatov.

The main danger was still posed by the German, Finnish and Soviet mines with which the Gulf of Finland was stuffed. German battleships continued

197

remain a headache for our fleet volunteers: they dedicated the autumn to the creation of a new mine and artillery position on the outskirts of Kronstadt. In total, the Baltics in 1941 dumped more than 12 thousand mines into the sea, almost all the stocks available in the warehouses. The Germans at that time continued to mine with impunity the middle part of the Gulf of Finland. The headquarters of Tributs did not have reliable data on the mine situation, did not organize mine reconnaissance and systematic minesweeping, without having such an opportunity: there were only seven of them left in the fleet, of which only five could go to sea. The route of movement, of course, was laid through the "well-known" Yuminda barrier. The ensuing period of storms and the appearance of ice also did not contribute to the operation.

The Finnish evacuation troops did not interfere.

The first contingent of troops was taken out on 26 October. A detachment of ships consisting of three minesweepers, accompanied by three boats of the Ministry of Defense under the command of captain 3rd rank V.P. Likholetov, in order to save time (!) followed Hanko without trawls. As a result, the T-203 Patron blew up and sank near Keri Island. The rest were delivered to Oranienbaum by a battalion of the 270th Infantry Regiment with light artillery. This allowed the command of the fleet to report to the Military Council

Leningrad Front on readiness for the operation. On October 31, the go-ahead was received for the start of the evacuation.

By this time, a detachment under the command of Admiral Drozd had been formed in Kronstadt, consisting of the destroyers Stoikiy and Strong, the mine layer Marty, five base minesweepers, six patrol boats and three torpedo boats. Submarines S-9 and Shch-324 were stationed at positions at the mouth of the Gulf of Finland for operational support of transitions, and S-7 in the area of Tallinn. On the night of November 2, a detachment of ships in two groups began to move towards Hanko. The main forces made

198

the transition was safe and they took on board 4246 commanders and Red Army soldiers and two field artillery divisions. A group of minesweepers, three torpedo boats and two patrol boats, which had been delayed and left separately, was attacked by German aircraft. As a result, all torpedo boats - 72, 88 and 102 - were sunk, and the damaged hunter was towed to Lavansaari Island. Drozd's detachment arrived in Kronstadt on November 4 without loss, delivering 4246 people.

Even before his return, a detachment of captain 2nd rank V.M. began to move to Hanko. Narykov as part of the destroyers Surovy and Smetlivy, four torpedo boats and four patrol boats in support of three base minesweepers. He arrived at his destination without incident, received more than 2,000 people, and set off on his return journey on the evening of November 4. Near the island of Naisaar, the destroyer Smetlivy left the swept lane and captured two mines at once with paravanes. From their explosions, the ammunition detonated on the ship, and it sank, the commander captain of the 2nd rank V.I. Maslov and about 400 officers, soldiers of the Red Army and Navy. 80 crew members and 233 people from among the evacuees were removed from the destroyer. They were brought back to Khanko on the minesweeper T-205 Gafel and three sea hunters. The remaining ships of the detachment arrived at Gogland, delivering 1263 people.

On November 9, the third detachment set off on the same route under the leadership of the commander of the battleship October Revolution, Rear Admiral M.3. Moskalenko. The detachment included the leader "Leningrad", the destroyer "Stoikiy", the mine layer "Ural", the transport "Zhdanov", five basic minesweepers and four small "hunters". The transition began in difficult weather conditions, the wind increased to seven points, the ships often lost sight of each other and could not follow the trawls. Two minesweepers collided, one of them was seriously damaged. The detachment commander decided to return to the raid of the island of Hogland. On the evening of November 11, the ships again headed for Hanko, accompanied by only three minesweepers, and

199

my large units - "Ural" and "Zhdanov" - did not have guard paravanes.

On the night of November 1st to November 12, the leader of "Leningrad" captured two mines by a guard. From their explosion, the ship received damage to the hull and anchored. The transport "Zhdanov" with a displacement of 3869 tons, following it in the wake, also stopped. Admiral Moskalenko, not having reached Hanko 65 miles, turned the detachment on the back course to assist Leningrad. At this time, the leader's commander decided to return to the base on his own. The transport was put in the lead, and the Leningrad, on which the gyrocompass failed, fell into its wake. As a result, Zhdanov, who did not have any means of protection, stumbled upon a mine and sank in 8 minutes, his team managed to be removed by the arrived hunter. After a night of ordeals, the surviving ships again concentrated at Gogland.

On the evening of November 13, the Moskalenko detachment, after reforming, again went to Hanko. Now it included the destroyers Proud and Severe, the Ural minzag, six MO boats and four minesweepers. Submarines L-2 and M-98, which were moving to combat positions, joined the convoy. Immediately after midnight, the minesweeper T-206 "Verp" was blown up on the beam of Cape Yuminda. Rescuing his team, the MO-301 boat was killed by a mine. Then the submarine L-2 was blown up twice, with

three people escaped her. From the explosion in the paravane, the flagship destroyer Surovy was severely damaged and had to be scuttled. Admiral Moskalenko boarded a patrol boat and returned to Hogland in the protection of two minesweepers. The command of the remaining ships was taken over by the commander of the minelayer division, captain 1st rank N.I. Meshchersky. On his orders, the detachment was led by the destroyer "Proud" in providing one trawler. Submarine M-98 separated and went to the area of the position on its own. An hour later, she died with the entire crew. Finally, at 03:26, the destroyer Proud was blown up by two mines and sank. As a result, on the morning of November 14, only the Ural, the minesweeper T-215 and three

small "hunter".

200

The death of the third detachment of ships somewhat stimulated the mental activity of the admirals, who nevertheless decided to change the route and use the northern fairway, although it passed close to the Finnish skerries, but it made it possible to go around the Yuminda barrier. Due to the low activity of enemy aviation, small-draught vehicles, converted trawlers and small-tonnage vessels were involved in the evacuation. Until November 29, three detachments removed about 9,200 people, 18 T-26 tanks, 720 tons of food and 250 tons of ammunition from Khanko. At the same time, the garrison of Osmussar Island was transferred to Hanko. Of the 29 ships and vessels that participated in the transportation during this period, the Azimut net layer and two converted minesweepers with 728 evacuees were lost on mines. About 12 thousand people remained on the peninsula.

To evacuate the last echelon of troops to Khanko, on November 30, a detachment arrived under the flag of Admiral Drozd, consisting of the destroyers Stoikiy and Glorious, six minesweepers, seven patrol boats and the Iosif Stalin turboelectric ship. The next day, the last detachment arrived under the command of Lieutenant Commander P.V. Shvetsov, which included the Volga gunboat, the Virtsaitis patrol boat, two minesweepers, two MO boats and transport No. 538. In the night | On December 2, the withdrawal of troops from defensive positions and their landing on ships began. The last to withdraw were cover units and sappers who mined roads and base facilities. The Finns did not provide any obstacles. The minesweeper Gafel removed the last 340 mines from Osmussar Island.

defenders.

At nightfall on June 2, Shvetsov's low-speed ships left Hanko, taking on board about 3,000 people. The detachment relatively safely reached Gogland, having lost the Virtsaitis patrol ship on the mines, from which they managed to remove people.

At 10 pm Drozd's detachment left the liquidated base. The ships were loaded beyond the norm. "Joseph Stalin" took on board 5589 people, 1200 tons of

201

allowances, destroyers - about 600 people each, on minesweepers - 300 people or more. In the second hour of the night on December 3, on the way to the island of Naissaar, the Joseph Stalin was blown up by two mines. The vessel, having lost its course and control, began to drift in a minefield, and soon a third explosion was heard. An attempt by the destroyer Glorious to take the turboship in tow was unsuccessful. In addition, a 305-mm Finnish battery from Myakiluoto Island opened fire on the convoy. The ships of the detachment removed 1740 people from the transport and continued their transition. The people remaining on the "Stalin" were supposed to be removed by the forces of Svyatov's detachment, but the rescuers, having no minesweepers, could not get through to the ship. The commander of the fleet was given bald hints that a ship with that name should not fall into the hands of the enemy, but nothing could be done, and Tributs reported that the Joseph Stalin had died as a result of severe damage from mine explosions and detonation of ammunition. . Abandoned half-flooded turbo ship ran aground off the Surupi Peninsula and was captured by the enemy. According to the German admiral Friedrich Ruge, "several thousand corpses and living people" were found in the holds of the Stalin. .

In total, 88 ships and vessels participated in the operation to evacuate the Hanko naval base, of which 25 were lost (including 3 destroyers, 1 patrol boat, 5 minesweepers, 2 icebreakers, 5 torpedo boats and 7 patrol boats), mainly on mines. Losses on the passage amounted to about 5,000 people, including 500 sailors. 22,822 people, 26 tanks, 14 aircraft, 72 guns, 56 mortars, 854 machine guns, about 20,000 rifles, 1,000 tons of ammunition and 1,700 tons of food were delivered to Kronstadt and Leningrad. The operation is considered highly "successful".

"Despite heavy losses," Khozin and Zhdanov reported to Moscow, "we believe that the result has exceeded all expectations."

The 8th Rifle Brigade became part of the 23rd Army and took up defense on the Karelian Isthmus.

202

By decision of the land command, without any pressure from the enemy, garrisons were evacuated from the islands of the eastern part of the Gulf of Finland - Bolshoi and Maly Tyuters, Bjerke, Gogland, Sommers. About 10 thousand people were taken out of them, who were immediately thrown into the trenches. Until the end of the evacuation from Hanko, about 400 people remained on Gogland, on December 11 they were also removed. At the same time, TKA-12 and TKA-42 were crushed by ice.

The Baltic Fleet, locked in Kronstadt and preparing for suicide, refused any active operations at sea.

In January, the 168th Rifle Division was added to the Oranienbaum "patch", the 2nd and 5th Marine Corps brigades became the 48th and 71st Rifle Divisions. The 50th Rifle Brigade was formed on the basis of the 3rd Marine Regiment.

Chapter 7

WINTER OFFENSIVE OF THE RKKA (January-February 1942)

On January 5, a meeting of the Headquarters was held in the Kremlin, at which a decision was made on the general offensive of the Red Army in the space from the Baltic to the Black Sea, inflicting a strategic defeat on the Wehrmacht and entering the state border of the USSR in 1942. In the defeat of the Army Group "North", according to the grandiose plan, the main role was assigned to the Volkhov Front. The troops of his right wing, in cooperation with the Leningrad Front, were to defeat the 18th German Army and unblock Leningrad; The left wing troops were tasked with defeating the enemy's 16th Army in cooperation with the right flank troops of the Northwestern Front. The Leningraders were to "assist the Volkhov Front in defeating the enemy defending near Leningrad and in liberating Leningrad from the blockade."

The troops of the North-Western Front were supposed to strike in the direction of Staraya Russa, Soltsy, Dno, cut off the communications of the Novgorod grouping of the enemy and defeat it.

The overall balance of forces in the northwestern direction was in favor of the Red Army. As of January 1, Army Group North, according to Soviet data, had 665,000 soldiers and officers, 6,000 guns and mortars, 160 tanks and assault guns, and 250 aircraft of all TYPES.

204

The troops of the Leningrad, Volkhov and Northwestern Fronts numbered about a million people, 9,000 guns and mortars, and at least 400 tanks. The headquarters also proceeded from the fact that the successful development of the counter-offensive near Moscow would not allow the German command to reinforce Army Group North with reserves or formations withdrawn from other sectors of the Soviet-German front. Under General Meretskov there were 28 rifle and cavalry divisions, 9 separate brigades, 25 separate tank and ski battalions -

242 thousand people, 2295 guns and mortars, 220 tanks. The Volkhov Front outnumbered the enemy in men by at least 2.2 times, in tanks - 3.2 times, in artillery - 1.5 times, in aviation - 1.3 times. The 54th army of Fedyuninsky had 11 divisions, 2 "dismounted" tank and one naval rifle brigades, 2 separate battalions - 83.5 thousand people, 1156 artillery and mortar barrels, 18 tanks.

In the 8th and 55th armies of the Leningrad Front, which were rushing towards them, there were 10 rifle divisions, 1 rifle and 2 tank brigades.

Six Soviet armies were opposed by three German army corps - 28, | and the 38th - and the "destroyed" 39th motorized.

The offensive was to be carried out in a deserted wooded and swampy area, in off-road conditions. through deep snow, which since the Ice Age had covered non-freezing abysses, which initially ruled out a wide maneuver.

By the appointed time, the Volkhov Front was not ready. The main reason was the delay in the concentration of troops. In the 59th Army, five divisions managed to turn around by the deadline, three more were on the way. In the 2nd shock, a little more than half of the formations occupied their initial position, the rest followed along the only railway. The troops reached the front line with great difficulty: "We went only at night, during the day we took refuge in the forest, To make a way in deep snow, we had to

205

lonns build fifteen people in a row. The first rows walked, trampling down the snow, which in places reached the waist. Ten minutes later, the leading row moved aside and was attached to the tail of the column. The difficulty of the movement was further aggravated by the fact that on the way there were unfrozen swampy places and streams with ice on the surface. Shoes got wet and frozen. It was impossible to dry it, since it was not allowed to make fires in the parking lots. The convoy horses were exhausted. The fuel ran out and the cars stopped. Stocks of ammunition, equipment, food had to be carried on ourselves. Let us add to this the 30-40 degree frosts and the strictest prohibition of the command, up to the execution of offenders, on making fires. On the other side, it was possible to get shot and for frostbite: they say, he deliberately frostbite, a scoundrel, in order to desert from the front (General Halder, what a fool, just at that time was tormented by the question of how to explain to the Fuhrer that the troops "can no longer withstand frosts exceeding 30 degrees").

Aviation did not arrive, the Air Force of the Volkhov Front had 118 combat aircraft, including only 6 bombers and 19 attack aircraft. There was no sledge transport and field kitchens, the accumulation of ammunition and material and technical means was extremely slow. Slyshno formed front had virtually no rear.

By the beginning of January, the troops had no more than one quarter of the ammunition instead of the five required for a breakthrough, and quite insignificant supplies of food and fodder. The arriving formations did not have weapons, means of communication, or transport. For example, the 378th Rifle Division was armed to the teeth with 379 rifles, 3 heavy and 15 light machine guns, and 3 mortars. For the entire 374th division, there were 344 rifles and 3 mortars. Nevertheless, they were immediately, "in order not to waste time," were sent to the concentration area in the expectation that the Germans would withdraw anyway, and that weapons would "be supplied" by the start of the offensive. Veteran of the 372nd Airborne Division

206

passes, as during the formation of the 1236th regiment, due to the lack of weapons, the soldiers were ordered to make wooden rattles in order to imitate firing during tactical exercises. The study ended quickly, and 30% of the regiment's personnel still pop-1st in their first battle with treshotkas.

The supply remained extremely unsatisfactory almost all the time. There was no o. total field hospital. Only that was known about the enemy. that he is sst and is located on the western bersgu. However, again "the difficult situation of the working people of Leningrad required slow offensive actions."

And the general of the army Meretskov was not able to object to the "Kremlin gory". I was just scared to the point of convulsions. As testified by General V.N. Nikolsky. who worked at that time in the headquarters of the Volkhov Front. at each call to the direct wire, the commander turned sharply pale and did not immediately answer the phone. Kirill Afanasievich was a broken man. Having made a brilliant military career in the 1930s, having served as Chief of the General Staff and Deputy People's Commissar of Defense, he was arrested on the first day of the war. Quite soon, the Lubyanka investigators with boots and rubber truncheons knocked out of Meretskov a confession of organizing a conspiracy to overthrow the workers' and peasants' power, spying for the German and British intelligence services at the same time, testimonies against accomplices - G. M. Stern, A. D. Loktionova, P.V. Rychagova, D.G. Pavlova, G.K. Zhukov, M.P. Kirponos and many others who vomited from pain in the neighboring cells of the Sukhanov prison or who had already fought with the Wehrmacht. Meretskov encoded this terrible period of his life in his memoirs as serving in the position of "permanent adviser to the Headquarters of the High Command." In September 1941, the general, who dreamed only of a quick death, was unexpectedly dressed in a brand new uniform and taken to Comrade Stalin. The leader inquired about Meretskov's health, of course, he felt well and was eager to fight, then "calmly introduced"

207

with a military situation and sent in company with Mekhlis a representative of the Headquarters to the North-Western Front. Most of the other "conspirators" were shot. At the front, the "red professor" taught the general, who had returned to favor, one more lesson: upon arrival at the 34th army, defeated by the enemy, Mekhlis ordered immediately, before the formation of headquarters officers, to shoot the artillery commander, Major General V.S. Goncharov "for disorganization in the management of artillery by the army and personal cowardice." Which was done immediately.

And Meretskov soon led the 7th Army, then the front. He did his best to "justify the trust" and always remembered that at any moment he could again be in the hands of shock investigators like Shvartsman or Rhodes. Therefore, the commander not only never tried to challenge Moscow's instructions, but often he himself "ran ahead of the locomotive", flooding the General Staff with utopian plans for the most decisive offensive operations, regardless of the losses and the state of the troops entrusted to him.

On January 7, without waiting for the concentration of all formations, the troops of the Volkhov Front, simultaneously with the Leningrad and North-Western Fronts, went on the offensive. The main blow from the bridgehead at the mouth of the Tigoda was delivered by the 4th Army, in which almost half of the front's artillery and two-thirds of the armored vehicles were concentrated. Formations of the 59th and 2nd shock armies were introduced into battle sequentially as they arrived.

"The artillery preparation was obviously insufficient," says P.P. Dmitriev. - For each howitzer, we had only 20 shells. Having shot them, we turned out to be unarmed and could not suppress the enemy's firing points. The infantry, defenseless against the hurricane fire of the German artillery, striking from the high western coast, fell on the Volkhov ice with thick black dots: the shooters did not have camouflage

was supposed to."

208

The offensive of the 54th Army, in which five rifle divisions, two brigades and three artillery regiments of the RTK took part, was deployed from Voronovo in the direction of Tosno by two operational groups - Sinyavino and Volkhov. Sviridov's 55th army was making its way towards it.

By January 12, the red flags were supposed to fly over Lyuban and Novgorod, but it turned out differently. Heavy fighting continued for several days, but it was not possible to break through the enemy defenses anywhere.

The fighting once again convincingly showed that you can't take a German with a simple quantitative superiority. The troops did not know how to fight. The newly arrived divisions did not complete the full course of training. They were sent to the front, having no skills in tactics and in handling weapons. And if you got a rifle just before the attack, it is a little more useless in unskilled hands than the three-shots with which the 372nd division went on the attack (even less: in the first battle, and it was at night, ours "treshotniks" had such a powerful psychological impact on the Germans that they caused them to panic and captured a stronghold). Separate units and subunits were completely formed from the inhabitants of the steppe or Central Asian regions, many of whom found themselves in the forests for the first time in their lives and, in order not to get lost, went on the attack in a "bunch". The fighters of the ski battalions "reacted to the terrain" much better, but they did not own skis and preferred to move on foot. "Of the seven ski battalions," the front commander reported, "when checking them, it turned out that the personnel of three battalions were completely unprepared for movement and combat on

skiing".

Artillery fired into the white light, then rifle, ski and sapper units were sent over and over again in frontal attacks on firing points.

The commanders did not know how to control units and organize interaction between them, many forbade the signalmen to turn on the radios, fearing that the Germans "for

209

take direction" and "cover" with fire. At the headquarters, they made plans and drew beautiful maps of defeating the enemy with an estimated rate of advance along the virgin snow up to 4 kilometers per day, breakthroughs, access to the operational space and timing of the "red" lines occupied. These plans did not envisage opposition from the Blues. Here is Colonel General I.S. Katyshkin, a former officer of the operations department, unabashedly reports that "the positive aspects" of the activities of the 59th Army headquarters during this period should include "generally the entire development of a plan to defeat the Chudovskaya enemy grouping", in which "the maturity of our tactical and operational thought", as well as the development of directives, instructions and orders: "But the trouble is: they reached the troops with a big delay... And as for the concentration of all artillery in the direction of the main attack, this decision sometimes was put into practice ... We then did not really know how to implement such a thing. Or even better: "... for some reason they forgot about it."

The headquarters were not cohesive, they lost control almost immediately as soon as the troops began to move, they had almost no technical means of communication, and where they were, they did not know how to use this "technique". And besides, here's another surprise: "...the enemy, with his persistent counterattacks, in every possible way prevented us from putting this plan into practice." In short, the headquarters were more like classes for the mentally retarded than the "brains of the armies." Well, you can't take seriously the arguments that, while working "with overstrain", the generals "gained some experience in managing the operation", and the employees of the operations department "gained skills in developing and communicating various combat documents to the troops."

And the technique was often still the same! For example, 122-mm howitzer fire spotters, following in infantry combat formations, were equipped with the latest "secret" TAT telephone sets of domestic production, which provided some audibility at a distance of up to 100 meters.

210

The commander of the 2nd shock army, promoted to commander from the post of deputy people's commissar of internal affairs, in the military field proved to be a complete cretin who composed for

troops similar to the Rostopchin posters: "Do not succumb to the cold, do not dress up as Ryazan women, be well done and do not succumb to frost," but who did not even have a clue about where the units entrusted to him were.

The commander of the Volkhov Front, who had accumulated a wealth of experience in leading armies and districts, who fought against the "Frankists" and "White Finns", also proved to be, to put it mildly, an insufficiently qualified military leader. True, unlike Zhukov, he admitted this.

The front did not have a pronounced strike force, its troops were stretched in one echelon along the banks of the Volkhov River, conducting continuous reconnaissance in force along the entire 150-kilometer line in order to open enemy positions and search for weaknesses in them. There was no second echelon at all, and there was nothing to build up a blow in order to develop success in depth. There was one division and 3 (three!) Tanks in reserve. In the event of a breakthrough in the enemy defenses, the front headquarters pinned all its hopes on the fresh army promised by Comrade Stalin.

"Meanwhile," writes Prozrevitiy Meretskov years later, "the main forces should have been concentrated from the very beginning on the sector of the main attack... We also failed to find the correct form and correct methods of operational interaction between the armies of the Volkhov and Leningrad fronts. This can be partly explained by the lack of close contact between me and the commander of the Leningrad Front M.S. Khozin. As a result, the blows of the fronts went in divergent directions and did not coincide entirely in time. The Nazis got the opportunity to repel our attacks in turn and carry out the delivery of operational reserves from the rear.

Apparently, in 1942, both Meretskov and Khozin, having served in the Red Army for twenty-five years, had little understanding of their profession. (The matter was further aggravated by

211

by the circumstance that they acted separately, it seems, quite deliberately. The highest Soviet generals were still convinced that the Germans were almost defeated and in the conditions of the Russian winter they were not capable of serious resistance, and therefore everyone mentally tried on the wreath of the winner and twirled holes for orders.)

Therefore, already on the second day it became clear that the offensive had failed as soon as it had begun. The Soviet units rolled back to their original lines.

The military council of the Volkhov Front asked the Headquarters to postpone the operation for another three days, Stalin generously gave five, allowing the front troops to postpone the offensive to January 13. A record of a telephone conversation between Stavka and the front has been preserved:

"According to all reports, your offensive is not ready by the 11th. If this is true, it should be postponed for a day or two in order to advance and break through the enemy's defenses. In order to attack and break through the enemy defenses, each army must have a strike group of at least three divisions, and, in addition, 50-60 guns must be concentrated in the area of the strike group of each army to support the strike group...

It is said: if you hurry, you will make people laugh. You got it so bad, you hurried with the offensive without preparing it, and made people laugh. If you remember, I offered you to postpone the offensive if Sokolov's shock army was not ready, and now you are reaping the fruits of your haste. at

And although Meretskov was well aware that a thorough preparation of the operation required at least another 15-20 days, he did not dare to object: "... we gladly jumped at the postponement offered by the Headquarters." So did the Supreme Commander rush the front, or were the generals themselves engaged in fraud, in a hurry to please the Leader with success? No wonder Marshal I.Kh. Bagramyan, regarding the setting of impossible tasks for the troops, noted that "the optimism of the center was largely inspired by our rather peppy reports."

While the excessively prolonged concentration of Soviet troops was going on, the enemy was preparing for defense. closer

212

Our operational task of Army Group North was to gain a foothold and hold on to the line of the Volkhov River and the railway line from the Kirishi station to the Mga station.

The Germans expected the Russians to attack at prepared positions, equipped with a system of resistance units and strong points, with a large number of bunkers and machine-gun platforms. The front line of defense ran along the western bank of the river, the surface of which was blocked by a dense system of all types of fire. The second defensive line ran along the embankment of the Kirishi-Novgorod railway line. It was a line of fortified settlements with well-organized fire communication between them. The entire space between Volkhov and the railway was densely entangled with barbed wire and covered with minefields. In the operational depth, large settlements were turned into powerful, by Soviet standards, nodes of resistance, the approaches to them were blocked by high snow banks, watered. By German standards, the defense was just beginning to be built, weak and under-equipped.

"To this was added an unusual diabolical cold in the complete absence of winter uniforms," analyzes the disposition of Hartwig Polman, the former commander of the 284th regiment of the 96th infantry division, "whereas the enemy was comfortably dressed, accustomed to the climate, fantastically unpretentious in terms of parts of nutrition and had many other benefits, fortunately, except for one - the ability to use these superior qualities to achieve real results.

Positions along the Volkhov were occupied by five infantry divisions - the 250th (Spanish), 126th, 215th, 61st and 21st. From the Kirishi station along the railway to Mgu, the 11th, 96th and 269th infantry divisions held the defense against Fedyuninsky's troops. In the second echelon were the 291st and 254th Infantry Divisions and the 9th SS Regiment. The badly battered formations of the 39th motorized corps were brought into order, replenished with equipment and people in the Liu area

213

baths. The 285th security division was stationed in the Eglino area.

The most promising direction for a breakthrough was the Moscow-Leningrad railway and highway. Naturally, it was here that the Germans created many firing points and concentrated the bulk of their artillery. There was no question of a sudden attack: everyone knew about the impending offensive. A wide maneuver was also ruled out: the lack of roads and difficult terrain riveted the troops to certain directions. The Soviet commanders decided to outwit the enemy, acting "in the manner of Suvorov" - with a bayonet and a grenade through swamps and impenetrable forests.

"There are no barriers for Soviet soldiers.

General Sokolov was removed from command on January 10th. The 2nd shock army, on which high hopes were pinned, was headed by Lieutenant General N.K. Klykov. The army was additionally reinforced by the 259th Rifle Division, cannon and rocket artillery. The 52nd Army was received by Lieutenant General V.F. Yakovlev. The number of combat

,supplies in the troops were brought to one ammunition load

`per division, which, of course, was completely insufficient, based not only on the regulations, but also because of the absolute lack of information about the enemy. The firing was planned not for specific targets, but for areas.

The quality of the troops has not improved. For example, the formation of the 59th separate shock brigade of lieutenant colonel Chernik began at the end of 1941 in the Saratov region, in the twentieth of December it was urgently sent to the front without weapons and personnel, on the way near Penza they loaded conscripts, with whom the unit commanders began to study the charters, political workers explained "the requirements of the party to the defenders of the Motherland" and "educated" contempt for death. Near Moscow, during the week, the fighters were taught mainly two tricks - a dash and an attack, in Yaroslavl the brigade received guns and mortars, in Budogoshcha, from where

214

a six-day march to the front line began - winter uniforms and, already in Malaya Vishera, small arms. The day before the start of the offensive, without any respite, after exhausting night marches, the 59th brigade took up its original position in the second echelon of the 2nd shock army. This brigade, by Soviet standards, can already be considered a trained formation: its soldiers held rifles in their hands for three days and, what is important, they understood Russian.

The former head of the political department of the front, General K.F. Kalashnikov proudly tells how a propagandist of the political department of the 59th Army in a couple of hours taught two companies of marching reinforcements to shoot, disassemble and assemble a rifle, staffed by Tajiks and Uzbeks, who had never seen weapons in their eyes: "The most amazing : it turns out, having started to train those marching companies, he did not even know a word in Uzbek and Tajik.

How were you understood? I was surprised.

What kind of communists will we be if people don't understand us? he simply replied. And you won't understand right away whether the general was an idiot, or his two literary editors, or whether they considered us readers as such. And "the most amazing thing" is that these companies, which did not even know a word in Russian, "simply" went into battle on the same day, immediately after the "training". However, I would be surprised if it turned out differently, what kind of communists would we be then? Veterans tell how these soldiers from the "outskirts of the southern Soviet republics" collected German wooden-handled grenades for heating and threw them into fires. It was worth taking guys so far, who, under "bloody tsarism," were not drafted into the army even during the world war, to drive trains across the country in order to stupidly and soullessly kill them without any benefit to the cause.

On January 13, 1942, at 9:30 am, the "Battle on the Volkhov" began.

The Soviet offensive developed painfully slowly. The Germans put up stubborn resistance everywhere.

215

In the sector of the 4th Army, they themselves attacked, and the troops of General Ivanov, instead of an offensive, fought defensive battles. The 59th Army, which, inflicting the main blow with five divisions from Gruzino, was supposed to defeat the enemy grouping in the Chudovo region and seize this railway junction, got stuck in continuous minefields in front of the positions of the enemy's 61st Infantry Division, covered by a murderous machine gun and mortar fire. The battalions did not even manage to cling to the opposite bank. Success was indicated only in the direction of operations of the 2nd shock and 52nd armies. By the end of the second day, their strike groups crossed the Volkhov and captured a number of settlements, wedged into the German defenses at the junction of the 126th and 215th infantry divisions.

"It was about 800-1000 meters to the front line of the enemy," recalls the former commander of the 327th Rifle Division, Major General I.M. Antyufeyev. "Deep snow, especially in the river valley, frost down to 30 degrees, strong machine-gun and mortar fire from the enemy, and we had neither light nor camouflage robes... The fighters had to overcome the space up to the line of attack by crawling, burrowing into the snow. Only at about 2 p.m. did the nerve echelon companies reach the line of attack. The people were so exhausted that they seemed unable to take a single step. I was forced

to bring into battle the second echelon of the division. And only together with him did the first echelon units go on the attack. The enemy defense in the Bor-Kostylevo sector was broken through. To the left, the 58th rifle brigade of Colonel F.M. Zhilnova, who took possession of the settlement of Yamno. Still further to the left, the right-flank formations of the 52nd Army reached the western bank of the river.

In order to develop success on the morning of January 15, Generals Klykov and Yakovlev sent the second echelons of their armies into battle, but they could not break the enemy's resistance. It took four days for the troops of the 2nd shock army to overcome the eight-kilometer path to the second position of the German defense, equipped along the Chudovo-Novgorod railway and highway. Another week they stomped on the 12-

216

kilometer line, unsuccessfully attacking the fortified points of Myasnaya Bor, Mostki and Spasskaya Polist. There were no longer enough shells, enemy aircraft dominated the air. The fighting was carried out blindly, the German positions were taken en masse, as long as there were still manpower.

"For many hours in a row, until dark, I with my auto-matchers responded by shooting at the shooting of the Germans," describes the actions of the 59th rifle brigade, the former chief of staff of the battalion K.I. Shtatnov. - The shooting was not aimed, since we did not see the enemy. When it got dark, they began to shoot in the direction from which the tracer bullets were flying. With the onset of darkness, fear attacked my fighters. It began to seem to them that we were surrounded, that they heard the clang of tank tracks. The hands of many fighters were shaking from excitement, which affected the quality of the shots... Soon the battle died down. I was called to the brigade headquarters. The lieutenant colonel was already drunk. He ordered me to report on the combat state of the battalion, I replied that he knew this better, since he personally led the battle, and I carried out his orders on the defense of the left flank. Obscene abuse poured on me, a pistol was pulled out of its holster and aimed at me. However, no shot was fired, and I survived.

Some time later, I received an order to advance two kilometers forward with my battalion and the detachment of heavy machine guns attached to me. No maps, no landmarks! "You will go straight. And that's it! I'm already fed up with everything. Tired of this drunken swearing of the commanders, their carelessness, and most importantly, the needless death of people due to the aimless conduct of the battle. And now - no combat mission. Move forward and that's it! The area is unknown to anyone. Where will I take people? Around the night, not a single sight is visible!

But an order is an order. Gathering people, I moved in the direction where I had previously fired from machine guns. A communication wire was pulled behind me... Unexpectedly, Major Startsev, the chief of staff of the brigade, himself appeared to me. Again obscene abuse: the lieutenant colonel calls me. (In two weeks

217

the same major Startsev in the hospital in Borovichi will drive up in a wheelchair - he was wounded in both legs - to my bed and say: "Oh, Shtatnov! For the way we fought, we should be shot!" He will be talking, of course, about the leadership of the brigade, and not about us, who obeyed their orders.) "

Lieutenant Colonel Chernik was removed from the brigade immediately after the battle for Myasnaya Bor, in which he lost not only many Red Army soldiers, but also half of his own headquarters. It is interesting what he taught the Chinese comrades; who had previously been an adviser? Or, on the contrary, did they teach him how to fight like that? After consulting with Stalin, Meretskov transferred 366, 382, 111 and 374 rifle divisions, 87 cavalry divisions and 12 ski battalions to the zone of the 2nd shock army, and concentrated more than 400 guns.

By this time, the 54th Army of the Leningrad Front, which had regrouped its forces and was trying to make a breakthrough in the area of the Pogostye station in the general direction of Tosno, "used up" 20,000 soldiers and all ammunition and stopped the offensive.

While honing blitzkrieg tactics before the war, the Wehrmacht, unlike the Red Army, did not squander the experience of the First World War. The Germans showed themselves to be masters of field fortification, adapting to any terrain, skillfully choosing positions and turning them into impregnable fortresses in the shortest possible time. The embankment of the Kirishi-Mga railway, defended by units of the 225th and 269th infantry divisions, and the Pogostye station, the starting point of the offensive of the Fedyuninsky army, became such an insurmountable obstacle for the Soviet troops. The enemy, having increased the height of the railway track to three meters, dug rifle and machine-gun cells into the embankment, built sites for anti-tank guns (10-12 barrels per kilometer) and dugouts for personnel, covered with rails and logs. All this was hidden from view of the observer behind a camouflage fence of branches and twigs. The approaches were heavily mined and covered by several

218

with rows of barbed wire. Key points were supported by powerful artillery groupings, self-propelled guns cruised behind the road.

In fact, after knocking out the infantry battalion defending it, the 281st Rifle Division occupied Pogost'e on December 17, 1941. However, having found a tank of alcohol on the tracks, our soldiers quickly lost their combat capability and a day later were defeated by a hundred German submachine gunners with two tanks. In January, the station was attacked daily by regiments of the 3rd Guards, 281st, 265th, 11th Rifle Divisions, then by the 31st, 177th, 80th, 198th and 11th Rifle Divisions, the 122nd and 124th Tank Brigades. - to no avail and with great losses. The army was bogged down in the enemy's first line of defense. Separate regiments and ski battalions overcame the railway in less fortified areas, but were quickly cut off by flank attacks and were forced to break through back. The commandant's obscenity rumbled along all lines of communication, flying to the front and German positions: "Your mother! Forward!!! Don't move, I'll shoot you! Yo Mama! Attack!!", but there was still no point.

Hendrik Wiers, a soldier of the 1st company of the 333rd regiment of the 225th infantry division, was sitting in the railway embankment together with his comrades: "It was hardly dawn, the Red Army soldiers attacked in a crowd. They repeated attacks up to 8 times a day. The first wave was armed, the second often unarmed, but few reached the embankment. On the 27th, the Red Army attacked our position fourteen times, but did not reach it. By the end of the day, many of us had been killed, many wounded, and our ammunition was depleted. In the darkness we heard the desperate calls of the wounded Red Army soldiers, who called for the orderlies. The screams continued until the morning when they were dying."

Some of the German machine gunners went crazy from such impressions.

"The formations and units of the army during this period fought local battles," writes General Fedyuninsky. "The most active actions took place in the Pogost area, but they could not be considered successful." At the end of January, Sinyavinskaya, acting as part of the 54th Army,

219

The operational group (128th, 294th, 265th Rifle, 21st Tank Divisions, 16th Tank, 6th Naval Brigade, 882nd Artillery Regiment) was transferred to the 8th Army of the Leningrad Front deployed in this area. The army command relocated to the Bolshoy land across Lake Ladoga on January 27, and Major General A.V. was appointed commander of the army. Sukhomlina is the eighth army commander in eight months of the war. On the Neva defensive line | February, the Neva Operational Group was re-formed under the command of General A.L. Bondarev. In the Volkhov region, on the basis of the 3rd Guards Division, which had been withdrawn to the reserve, the formation of the 4th Guards Rifle Corps began.

The activities of Meretskov and Fedyuninsky have not yet made a special impression on the German high command, judging by the notes of the chief of staff of the OKH. So, on January 19, General Halder noted that "on the front of the 18th Army, it is also as if expected (!) major blows." Much more worrying was the progress of the 11th and

34th Army of the Northwestern Front to Staraya Russa and Demyansk. The commander of Army Group North offered to start an immediate withdrawal here, but Hitler categorically demanded that the front be held on the Valdai Hills. Having failed to achieve unity of views with the freshly baked Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Wehrmacht, Field Marshal von Leeb asked to resign, leaving in the end: "Tiltler behaves in Russia as if he were acting together with the Russians." The Fuhrer, who already counted Leeb among the "incorrigible anti-fascists," accepted his resignation, and then dismissed the field marshal to the reserve. Army Group North was taken over by Oberst General Ggorg von Kuchler, and Cavalry General Georg von Lindemann took command of the 18th Army.

Only on January 24, the 366th Infantry Division of Colonel S.I. Bulanov captured Myasny Bor, the key position of the second line of the German defense. Next

220

In the afternoon, developing an offensive along the clearing, the Siberians occupied the villages of Krechno and Novaya Keresht. Meretskov immediately decided to introduce the 13th Cavalry Corps under the command of General N.I. Gusev, consisting of two cavalry and one rifle divisions. The directive of the front commander No. 0021 stated: "Not later than January 27, intercept the highway and the Chudovo-Leningrad railway and take Lyuban. Do not get involved with the defense organization." But, as soon as they left the places of concentration, the horsemen were subjected to continuous attacks by German aircraft, they had to move at night, on foot in deep snow, leading the horses by rein. The corps managed to enter the breakthrough only on the morning of January 26. By the end of the day, the 87th cavalry division of Colonel D.M. Barinov defeated the enemy garrison in Olkhovka with a surprise attack, the 366th Rifle on January 27 occupied Fenev Lug. In five days, the corps advanced 40 km and cut the Leningrad-Novgorod railway near the Rogavka station.

However, dashing cavalry rail on Lyuban did not work. Deep snow cover did not allow to operate off the roads, and the corps was not attached to ski battalions. The dominance of German aviation, with the complete absence of anti-aircraft weapons among the cavalry, forced them to stop active operations during daylight hours. There were not enough guns and mortars; the 25th Cavalry Division, Colonel V.F. Trantina, called the "light type" division, had no artillery at all. There was no surprise factor. Strongholds had to be taken by sudden night attacks in penta formation. The corps was drawn into fruitless protracted battles, losing maneuverability and mobility. The rear remained on the eastern bank of the Volkhov, and General Gusev's au - almost 6,000 horses, which, unlike the slaughterhouses, had to be fed.

"I am still perplexed," reflects the former private I.I. Kalabin, — what did the command count on, driving horses into an impenetrable forest, where there are no roads, no paths and snow up to the belly of the horses? After all, it was enough to look at the topographic map of the Novgorod Region.

221

Just to understand: these places beyond the Volkhov are the real land of Mazai - swamps and swamps ... I don't know what military power they counted on.

Following the corps, the troops of the 2nd Shock Army and the artillery of the RGK pulled into the breakthrough. The offensive was carried out, in essence, with open flanks, since the neighboring armies lagged significantly.

In agreement with the Headquarters, it was decided to transfer all the efforts of the Volkhov Front in the direction of Spasskaya Polist and Lyuban. The 4th Army, which had suspended the offensive, expanded its operational sector at the expense of the 59th Army, and the latter moved even further south, almost to the rear of the 2nd Shock Army. Thus, a grouping of troops of three armies was created in the direction of Spasskaya Polisti: in the center, on a 15-kilometer sector, the 2nd shock attack was advancing, to the right and left of it - the main forces of the 59th and 52nd armies. tasked with widening the gap.

The width of the breakthrough along the western bank of the Volkhov River reached 25 km, but in the area of Myasny Bor it narrowed to 3–4 km. Bloody battles unfolded in this neck. On the right flank

General Galanin with six divisions unsuccessfully tried to break through the enemy defenses on the 10-kilometer section Tregubovo - Spasskaya Polist, defended by the 215th Infantry Division of Lieutenant General Kneiss. For several weeks, the "Kechling Brigade" did not give up its positions in the village of Mostki. The losses of the 59th Army in manpower amounted to more than 16 thousand people by the end of the month. The same situation developed on the left flank, where the 52nd Army, consisting of five divisions, after numerous attacks on the villages of Koptsy and Lyubtsy, which were held by the 126th Infantry Division of Lieutenant General Lauks, itself went on the defensive.

In the battles for the village of Koptsy, the feat was accomplished by the soldiers of the Red Army of the 225th Infantry Division, Sergeant I.S. Gerasimenko, privates A.S. Krasilov and L.A. Cheremnov, who simultaneously covered three embrasures of enemy bunkers. No details of this night fight

222

is not given anywhere, except for a rather confused report from the head of the political department of the front, divisional commissar Gorokhov: .

"The scouts Arsenin, Lifanov and Seleznev rushed to the first bunker and began to destroy the Nazi garrison through the chimneys and doors with grenades. (A rather unusual way to conduct reconnaissance, but it is clear that a group of blockers was operating.) Moe scouts opened fire from other, closely spaced bunkers. Noticing this, [Yerasimenko, Cheremnov and Krasikov (he was also Krasilov in a leaflet issued by the State Film Publishing House, then turned out to be Krasilov) ran up to them, threw grenades at them and pulled out machine guns through the embrasures to use them against the enemy. At this time, the scouts were subjected to new shelling from three previously silent machine-gun points, the fire of which could disable the entire group. Sergeant Gerasimenko and his fighters Cheremnov and Krasikov were closest to these machine-gun bunkers. At the command of Gerasimenko, each of them rushed to one of the points, but there were no more grenades (Did they all run out at once?), And you can't stop machine-gun fire with a rifle. (It is not clear where the machine guns pulled out of the embrasures had gone.) It was impossible to hesitate, and all three of them simultaneously came up with one solution - without any command, without a word, they rushed to the bunkers and closed their embrasures with their bodies. Enemy machine guns fell silent. The rest of the scouts surrounded the bunkers and blew them up. The battle continued for an hour and a half. The scouts fought bravely and mercilessly, avenging the death of their comrades. They destroyed 55 soldiers and officers and blew up 6 bunkers. (Of ours, apparently, no one else died or died less heroically.)

Doubts are raised by the fact that not a single army of the world could do such feats, contrary to the laws of physics and human psychology. (A bullet weighing 12.8 grams from the MS-34 flies out at a speed of 755 m/s, calculate the force of impact yourself. War veteran writer Viktor Astafiev, discussing with another front

223

Tovik, Vyacheslav Kondratiev, the feat of Alexander Matrosov, remarked: "Of course, he didn't rush with his chest to the pillbox ... You know, you can't even close the embrasure with a well-fed commissar's ass ...").)

In the meantime, units of the 2nd shock army went deeper and deeper into the forests and non-freezing swamps. Only forward!

"Strange as it may sound," writes H. Polman, "but the outcome of the battle was decided not in the depths of the territory at the tip of the enemy's offensive wedges, which cut far into the forests of the rear, no matter how threatening these wedges may seem on the map, but on the spot Volkhov breakthrough and near the Novgorod-Chudovo highway, those. near the settlements of Myasnoy Bor, Mostki and Spasskaya Polist. This was clearly recognized by the command of Army Group North, which planned its countermeasures accordingly. This was also understood by the soldiers, non-commissioned officers and officers, who fought here for every square meter of land with special stamina and perseverance.

The Soviet command, despite all efforts, clearly did not take German resistance seriously enough and relied on the effectiveness of its strike in depth instead of first advancing on both sides of the pgsosse to the north and south. .

The troops of General Klykov - 12 settlement divisions, urged on by orders from the front, not knowing what was happening in their rear, tried to advance in a fan around the entire circumference of the territory liberated from the enemy. The density of battle formations decreased accordingly. The 59th rifle brigade, after fierce fighting on January 28, captured Dubovik, Bolshoi and Maly Eglino. The 87th cavalry division, the 53rd and 57th brigades were drawn into multi-day battles for the village of Ruchi, 25 km from Lyuban.

The advance was largely dictated by the conditions of the terrain and the stubbornness of the enemy. Soviet formations were successful, advancing to the west and northwest, where there was almost no enemy and they had to fight mainly

224

with nature. But as soon as we turned east, towards Lyuban and the railway line to Leningrad, the achievements were insignificant. Having received a rebuff, the Soviet troops were forced to bypass the settlements from the west, again delving into the snow-covered jungle, sometimes they simply wandered through the forests, not knowing their tasks, having no information either about their own or about the German units. "So, in the 53rd Rifle Brigade," reported the head of the political department of the Volkhov Front, Divisional Commissar Gorokhov, "not only the Red Army soldiers, but also the commanders did not know the combat mission, they did not know the settlements that were being attacked." Near Yamno, three rifle brigades at once, briskly marching in column formation without reconnaissance and combat protection, in full confidence that everything around was "already ours", fell into a fire bag organized by the Germans. As a result of the "Brownian movement" of a huge number of formations, units, separate subdivisions and logistics agencies, with the state of communication characteristic of the Red Army of that period, the army headquarters controlled the process to a lesser extent.

"With an indiscriminate advance ...," the Secretary General explained to members of the "Order of the Sword" in 1929, "the offensive must inevitably fizzle out and fail. Indiscriminate advance is death for the offensive. Having become the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, Stalin forgot what he taught, apparently believed that war was a simpler matter than collectivization. And who would dare to fix it.

From the first days, the troops began to experience a chronic shortage of ammunition, which was delivered from Malaya Vishera late and in quantities not sufficient for the needs of the army. The shortage of food in the units was made up for with horsemeat: almost all the equipment was horse-drawn. And the losses in horses, which, due to the lack of fodder, were fed with birch branches, were large. As one of the veterans figuratively put it: "The horses died like flies." Not only the 2nd Shock Army, which had gone into the breach, was on a starvation ration, but also the neighbors who stood still, the entire Volkhov Front. "In the armies

225

there is absolutely no shag, sugar, crackers, meat, concentrates, flour," the restless Gorokhov sounded the alarm after checking the condition of the 4th and 52nd armies. - At 65 sd, food is cooked from one cereal, dispensed at half the rate. There is no salt in 50 cd. The situation with fodder has worsened, oats are running out, hay has been used up, the horse stock is severely depleted. In the 60th Artillery Regiment, 124 horses, due to exhaustion, cannot transport materiel."

The losses of the Volkhov Front in January amounted to 73,000 soldiers and commanders, but at the same time, due to new reinforcements, the number of troops and equipment did not decrease, and in terms of artillery it increased one and a half times. As of February 1, there were 25 divisions, 9 brigades, 36 separate battalions - more than 233 thousand people, 3196 guns and mortars, 171 tanks. The air forces of the front already had 313 combat aircraft. Army aviation commanders usually

"forget", but the home front workers have their own pride, and they report that the Army Air Forces received an additional 188 vehicles.

The memoirs of Soviet generals, written on the basis of reports from the Sovinformburo and their own reports, invariably state that the battles took place with "great losses for both sides." This is impossible purely theoretically, given that the "armed to the teeth" Germans were firmly defending themselves in prepared positions "in strong defensive structures", and our soldiers attacked them in an open field "without sufficient fire support". For example, the former "guards mortar" N.I. Isakov recalls: "For as long as I have been in Myasnoy Bor, I have not seen the earth, the corpses of our soldiers are everywhere. I saw the killed German only once, everyone went to look at him as if he were a curiosity. And how could it be otherwise if at the head of the armies were "commanders" like General Ivanov, to whom the front commander was forced to send telegrams like this: se

226

serious support of the attack with mortar and artillery fire". With "providing", according to Meretskov, it is possible to hit the ass.

And marching reinforcements kept coming and going, Russia is big. When there were not enough rifles for everyone, they were given sticks with attached bayonets,

A well-known case: a bullet is a fool, a bayonet is well done! The wounded were not taken out during the battle, and no one provided primary assistance to them, because, contrary to all charters and common sense, fathers commanders put orderlies and medical instructors in the rifle chain on a par with ordinary soldiers. For this reason, primarily in the 4th Army, a huge shortage of junior medical personnel quickly arose. In the end, Meretskov, at the risk of causing discontent with the Headquarters, was forced by his order to remove Ivanov from his post and appoint Major General N.I. Lyapin. Stalin nevertheless expressed dissatisfaction with the excess of authority, but approved the decision of the front commander.

The 55th Army of the Leningrad Front, with six divisions (268, 43, 56, 70, 90, 125th), with the support of the 124th and 125th tank brigades and the 86th separate tank battalion, conducted offensive battles all winter in the mouth of the Tosna River and in the anti-tank ditch, as well as south of Kolpino for the villages of Putrolovo and Yam-Izhora.

"The Military Council of the 55th Army set us the task of capturing Krasny Bor," recalls Colonel V.K. Zinoviev from the headquarters of the 125th Infantry Division. - I think that the division could fulfill the order and take Krasny Bor. The anti-tank ditch was already in our hands. And it was a convenient line for the concentration of troops and the offensive. It might have been expected that the neighboring divisions would be ordered to make it easier for us to carry out the task of capturing Krasny Bor by offensive operations in order to cover our flanks. But the neighboring divisions did not receive such an order, and we attacked with open flanks.

227

Having rushed to the attack, our units moved forward, but fell under the crossfire of the enemy and were forced to lie down on the frozen ground, which you cannot gnaw out, neither with a entrenching shovel, nor with your teeth. The 657th Rifle Regiment, commanded by Colonel Varyukhin, suffered particularly heavy losses. The regiment advanced in the first echelon and lost so many fighters and commanders that it became unfit for combat. This was reported by the regiment commander to the division commander, Major General Fadeev Ivan Ivanovich.

- Repeat what you said! exclaimed the general. And I became alert as I listened to their conversation.

"There are thirteen active bayonets and one heavy machine gun left in the regiment," said a voice in the receiver, which the general brought close to my ear.

- It can't be! exclaimed the general again...

Throughout January and February, the forty-second part of the division fought, which in the reports of the Sovinformburo were called battles of local importance. We advanced almost to Krasny Bor. But this not only did not improve, but even worsened our situation, because parts of the neighboring divisions still remained in place. And the regiments and battalions of our division

The Zia, who advanced forward, now had to repel the attacks of the enemy not only from the front, but also from the flanks, because we ourselves, or rather, by order of the army command, got into the bag ... At the same time, the losses in people were large.

Attempts to take Krasny Bor were made in March.

"The Krasnobor operation," concludes ex-army commander General V.P. Sviridov, once again convinced us that an offensive in one direction with limited forces, with the other sectors of the front inactive, yields success only in the first days, when we still "retain the advantage of surprise and superiority in forces."

Was it worth it to "convince once again" in elementary things that were undeniably proven even during the World War? And so long: until March 1943, the continuous assault on Krasny Bor continued! How much for it

228

lives, only God knows. Active operations at the same time were deployed by units of the 13th, 21st and 189th rifle divisions of the 42nd army on the outskirts of the strongholds of Verkhnee Koyrovo, Kiskino, Tuypolovo, Sinda, Veneryazi, achieving nothing territorially, but, of course, "destroying many enemy soldiers and officers.

At the beginning of February, the army of General Klykov finally got bogged down in forests and swamps, and the 59th army of Galanin came close to Spasskaya Polist only in the middle of the month, but could not take it. "The name of this village," writes Meretskov, "near which fierce battles were in full swing for half a year, I will never forget. The neck of the breakthrough expanded, I remember, to 13 kilometers ... But this was where our success in expanding the breakthrough ended. Despite persistent attacks, the troops failed to push the breakthrough even a meter apart. Sometimes even defensive battles had to be fought. It became clearer and clearer that it would not be possible to reach Kingisepp and encircle the entire 18th German Army.

The marshal refers to the strength of the German defense and alludes to some six divisions, "transferred from France, Denmark, Yugoslavia and Greece itself", which replenished Army Group North. It is very possible, but these divisions could not interfere with Meretskov in any way. Moreover, when it became clear that the offensive of the Volkhov Front had run out of steam, the Germans withdrew their formations from here and transferred them to the south. The fact is that at that time a critical situation developed south of Lake Ilmen, in the zone of the 16 troops of the North-Western Front under the command of Lieutenant General P.A. Kurochkin, surrounding six divisions of the 2nd Corps of General Walther von Brockdorf-Allefeldt, organized the Demyansk "cauldron". The German divisions arriving from Europe were supposed to close the gap formed at the junction of the two army groups. In addition, in order to de-blockade the Demyansk group, on February 13, the Fuhrer's Headquarters

229

a decision was made to form a strike group under the command of General Seidlitz-Kuribakh in the area of Staraya Russa. It included, in particular, the 122nd Infantry and 18th Motorized Divisions, removed from the Leningrad and Volkhov directions.

Telegrams and calls were sent from Moscow to the headquarters of the Volkhov Front with demands to intensify offensive actions, accusations of indecision and inaction. Meretskov, in turn, complained about the lack of tanks, shells, aviation, fatigue of the troops and the low quality of the arriving reinforcements, but at the end of the negotiations he invariably answered one thing: "It will be done." Stalin turned out to be a hostage of the system he had created, everyone was torn first to report on the occupation of the most run-down village, which in reports turned into a powerful enemy resistance center, and no one dared to upset the Leader with bad news.

The inherent defect of the system remained, in army jargon, ubiquitous slander from top to bottom, simply eyewash. For example, General Katyshkin reports that, in fulfilling the task of widening the breach made in the German defenses, the 59th Army "very soon became involved in a period of intense and protracted fighting." True, he himself was not present at this, therefore he emphasizes that "naturally, I drew data from documents", that is, from operational reports. Let's scoop up from those documents where the general could not look. The head of the Special Department of the NKVD of the Volkhov Front, Major of State Security Melnikov, in a memorandum addressed to GKO member Comrade Malenkov, "signaled" about the situation in General Galanin's army:

"The command of the 59th army, knowing that the 377th, 372nd, 374th and 378th rifle divisions are not conducting active operations and are actually occupying the defense, in the operational reports of the headquarters, the actions of these divisions are noted as "actively pinning down the enemy" and "combat reconnaissance". The inactivity of these divisions in operational reports is also called "repelling enemy counterattacks", without being ashamed to report,

230

that the divisions repulse the counterattack of one enemy platoon. Among the most characteristic examples of fraud, we cite the following: the 1269th rifle regiment of the 382nd rifle division occupies the front line for 18 kilometers, does not conduct active operations, takes up defense. Shtarm writes that the regiment is actively holding down the enemy. The 377th Rifle Division occupies a 13-kilometer front, does not conduct active operations, takes up defense. Shtarm writes in the operational report that "the 377th division is conducting active combat reconnaissance." In fact, 2-3 people are sent to conduct reconnaissance. Units of the 372nd Rifle Division occupy a 4-kilometer front, they are not conducting active operations, they are defending. In the operational summary of the army, it is reported: "parts of the 372nd division are blocking the enemy" ...

Recently, in parts of the 59th Army, cases of moral decay have become more frequent on the part of individual servicemen. Often, using their official position, commanders incline female personnel to sexual debauchery, but here, in the presence of outsiders, they solve combat missions. Individual commanders and commissars of units, being carried away by women, systematically get drunk. During combat operations, instead of organizing a battle, they sit out in dugouts ...

The commander of the 1249th Rifle Regiment of the 377th Rifle Division, Major Shvagirev, systematically gets drunk with his assistant in the household department, Savichev. On February 19, Shvagirev, being in a state of intoxication, scolded political instructor Nosov with swear words and hit him in the face three times. Shvagirev, in a drunken state, gathered the entire command staff of the regiment, with whose forces he ordered to take the enemy's bunker ...

The commander of the 378th Rifle Division, Colonel Dorofeev, and the commissar of the division, Kornyshev, systematically drink and cohabit with women. Being drunk, Dorofeev declared to the commanders: "... The women here are prostitutes, and you, commanders, do not waste this opportunity ..."

On February 5, during the offensive of the division, the chief of staff and the commissar of the division left for the command post. Before

231

Rofeev summoned a military paramedic's girlfriend to his dugout and drank with her for four days. He motivated his refusal to leave the command post due to illness.

The command staff in conversations among themselves says: "Well, how is our drunken command, what did they decide? .." At the moment of performing a combat mission. Dorofeev, Kornyshev and Chief of Staff Akselrod drank for three days without leaving the dugouts.

Such facts of moral decay in parts of the 59th Army are not isolated. According to our information, the commanders and commissars of units and formations do not take measures to eliminate such phenomena, since they themselves are the culprits of this. The Military Council of the Army has been repeatedly informed about the facts of the moral decay of individual commanders and political workers of units of the 59th Army. However, he did not take measures to curb the outrages.

Of course, such behavior of the authorities demoralized and corrupted the subordinates. But, on the other hand, it seems that it would be better if these "Dorofeevs" and "Shvagirevs" did not climb out of their dugouts at all. Because when they, drunk, undertook to "organize the battle",

it turned out even worse (a month later, Colonel I.P. Dorofeev was covered with a stray shell, and he got into the calendar of the 59th Army as a commander, "who did not spare his life in the name of victory over the enemy, for the cause of the party, for the Motherland"). G

On February 7, Marshal Voroshilov, a representative of the Headquarters, arrived at the front. He passed on an order demanding by any means to get to the Lyuban-Chudovo railway before the beginning of March. Then the marshal, as usual, climbed to the front line, forcing all the escorts and security officers to pour cold sweat. Pictures of Voroshilov's visits are described in many memoirs and always looked the same: accompanied by the next divisional commander, the marshal got under fire to the positions of the advanced battalion, there, in front of the enemy, without bowing to the bullets and clearly holding his visor, listened to a report on the situation, after which paternally talked

232

with the soldiers and made appeals. For example, P.M. Koshevoy, commander of the 65th Rifle Division that fought near Myasny Bor:

"That's good," said the marshal, having heard that the division had successfully completed its combat missions. - And now we will go to any battalion to the front line.

Meretskov and Yakovlev began to give me signs that could mean only one thing: in no case should you bring a representative of the Headquarters to the front line.

"I can't, Comrade Marshal. Highway and railroad are targeted by the enemy. There always, when people appear, artillery strikes and there is a dense machine-gun FIRE.

— Are you afraid? asked K.E. Voroshilov. - And I considered you a man of a tense intimidation. Went, went.

We went to the forefront together. The marshal ordered everyone else to stay at my command post... The marshal was interested in everything and was by no means going to hide from the bullets that kept whistling next to us and plowed the snow..

I got very hot then from K.A. Meretskov for a long stay with K.E. Voroshilov at the forefront. The marshal himself was extremely pleased and left the division in excellent spirits." It is not known what the "first red commander" saw from the forward trenches, maybe Leningrad. In any case, he did not see the coming military catastrophe (although on the Western and Kalinin fronts, reckless breakthroughs in narrow sectors have already led to

the encirclement of the 29th Army of General Shvetsov and the 33rd Army of General Efremov). So, in an excellent mood, and drove off to Moscow.

Based on the experience of the Tikhvin operation, temporary operational groups were created by order of the front commander. Thus, the formations of the 2nd shock army, which formed a front facing east, were united in the group of Major General P.F. Privalov (191st, 382nd rifle divisions, 57th rifle brigade). Provide left

233

the flank of the army and to intercept the Leningrad-Novgorod railway was supposed to be Zhiltsov's task force (23rd, 25th, 58th rifle brigades). Korovnikov's group (327th, 374th, 111th rifle divisions and 22nd rifle brigade) was advancing on Finev Lug. The 4th Guards Division and the 59th Rifle Brigade, operating in the direction of Sennaya Kerest, formed the group of General A.I. Andreeva.

A task force appeared in the 59th Army under the command of Major General P.F. Alferyev, who was made personally responsible for the capture of Spasskaya Polista. At this village, a "carousel" of Soviet formations was spinning non-stop, alternately thrown into the assault - the 327th rifle division, 59, 57, 22nd separate brigades, 111, 92, 382, 372, 374, 2- I divisions...

"The offensive was usually carried out for four days," recalls the former platoon commander from the 382nd division, I.D. Nikonov. - At night they crawled, checked how many were left alive. You crawl, move, are you alive or not? It happened that a person was not killed, but dead: he froze. Frosts in January reached 40 degrees. On the days of the onset of food, we did not receive. When the offensive stopped, the rest were taken to their original positions and fed there. People made fires and warmed themselves, fell asleep, often setting fire to clothes and felt boots. I had to crawl to the front line and take off the dead - there is nowhere to get a new one. Everything was lacking: food, fodder, ammunition. Cartridges were dug out one or two clips, they were also taken from the dead ... In front of the German positions, everything was pitted with shells and covered with the corpses of our soldiers, the wounded tried to crawl over the corpses and also died or froze. We didn't have any trenches or even cells. They climbed into the craters and hid behind the corpses... They began to find out how many fighters each had. There were five in one regiment, six in another, and seven in ours. In total, 35 bayonets remained at the forefront. And the order is the same - attack! In the morning they came again. TO; noon left: you, me, and you and me ... Nobody removed the corpses from the front line, they decayed, fallen without a trace .. "Some regiments were sent to

234

reorganization, instead of them, new ones were introduced into the business. The attack was launched every day, month after month, but they failed to take Spasskaya Polist.

The command of the Army Group "North" also practiced the creation of battle groups in separate areas. Only Meretskov was engaged in this with the aim of somehow establishing control over the masses of troops sunk in the "jungle" and delegating responsibility, and the German generals - due to the scarcity of reserves. Separate headquarters, battalions and batteries, removed from quiet sectors of the front, were reduced to the composition of improvised formations with a variable composition. Guardsmen and rear services, repair, construction and security units, vacationers unloaded from trains were thrown to "darn holes" in the defense. So, after the Soviet breakthrough near Myasny Bor, on the right flank of the 38th Army Corps, the Yashke battle group was formed on the basis of the 20th Motorized Division and other units. In the Luga area, having subordinated all formations to the commander of the 285th Security Division, the command of the 18th Army created a battle group of General von Nolo. Units of the 225th Infantry Division, which had arrived from France as early as the beginning of December and so frightened Meretskov, formed the von Basse group, which occupied the Eglino-Krasnaya Gorka line. (Suddenly transplanted from the soil of sunny Wignacourt into the Volkhov forests ringing with frost in the middle of January, in light overcoats, unprepared tactically and psychologically, she carried large

losses, especially from frostbite. One of the veterans of the division complained to our veteran after the war that he was given only eight hours a day for heating - two hours in position, an hour for rest, and how little heat was in German wooden bunkers with an iron stove. Ours, a night-timer in the snow and not always able to make a fire, simply did not understand.) But in general, the Soviet successes on the Volkhov were regarded by the German General Staff as tactical and not inspiring serious fears. Most importantly, the 215th and 126th Infantry Divisions, with reinforcements arriving at them, firmly held the flanks of the breakthrough, preventing the German defenses from rolling down the Volkhov.

235

On February 23, units, batteries, and squadrons read out the celebratory order of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR: <... The initiative is now in our hands, and the efforts of Hitler's loose rusty machine cannot hold back the pressure of the Red Army. The day is not far off when the Red Army, with its mighty blow, will throw back the brutal enemies from Leningrad, clear the cities and villages of Belarus and Ukraine, Lithuania and Latvia from them; Estonia and Karelia, will liberate the Soviet Crimea, and the red banners will fly victoriously all over the Soviet land."

Chapter 8

LUBA OPERATION (February - July 1942)

The result of the Voroshilov inspection was a new directive of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command of February 26. It clarified the tasks of the 2nd shock and 54th armies. Both armies were now to advance towards each other and unite in Lyuban no later than March 5th. From that moment on, the strategic operation to defeat Army Group North passed into the category of an independent front-line operation and became known as Lyuban. And now the task was more modest - to surround and destroy the 1st Army Corps of General von Both.

"This directive meant, in essence, the Stavka's rejection of its original plan," writes General M.S. Khozin. "Having realized that neither the forces nor the means were enough to carry it out, the Headquarters proposed to sequentially defeat the Lyuban-Chudovskaya, and then the Mginskaya group. If this decision had been made at the beginning, that is, when organizing the operation, perhaps the outcome would have been different."

For the air support of the operation, eight aviation regiments of the RVGK, long-range bomber aviation and air forces of the fronts were involved. A few days earlier, Hitler once again pointed out the importance of Leningrad to the commander of Army Group North: "Not a meter back! The most important thing is to keep Leningrad in the blockade ring. Redistribution of areas of responsibility of the 18th

237

and 16th armies. General Lindemann took over the entire front to Lake Ilmen, concentrating in his hands the leadership of the Volkhov battle.

General Meretskov, following the instructions of the Headquarters, demanded the speedy exit of parts of the 2nd shock to the Moscow-Leningrad railway. In response, Klykov reported: "Enemy aviation dominates the air all the time and paralyzes the actions of the troops. The road network is in poor condition... The supply of fodder, food, fuel and ammunition is far from meeting the existing needs. To develop a successful offensive, the army needs three fresh divisions, a division of rocket launchers, at least two motor battalions, at least three road construction battalions, at least fifteen fuel trucks, hay, replenish the horse train and cover the army from the air.

For a breakthrough to Lyuban, the 80th Cavalry Division of Colonel L.A. was transferred to the 13th Cavalry Corps from the 4th Army. Slanov, and from the reserve of the front - the replenished 327th rifle. These units were ordered to take Krasnaya Gorka "on the move" and go to Lyuban.

Behind them, developing success, the 46th Infantry Division of General A.K. was to enter the breakthrough. Okulich and the 22nd Rifle Brigade of Colonel F.K. Pugachev. The capture of the "populated nuncta" Krasnaya Gorka, which was a forester's house on the edge of a swamp, was hindered by the heavily fortified embankment of the Chudovo-Weinmarn railway. And you had to get to her. IN

"The path ran through forests and swamps, devoid of any roads. - recalls P.P. Dmitriev. — Moved only by compass. Ahead, topographers plotted the route. The deep snow beneath it is unfreezing swamps. Depths weighing 2400 kg sank immediately on both wheels. The horses were exhausted. People — firefighters and managers — put on straps and together, with the help of materials at hand, dragged guns across the swamps. The speed of advance was determined by meters, and yet we tried to keep up with the infantry. All along the way

238

There were a lot of killed horses in the area, a trace left by the cavalry corps. The picture is terrible. All daylight hours - German air raids. True, the bombs, falling into the swamp, exploded at great depths, and direct hits were rare.

The forward detachment formed by General Gusev, which consisted of the 80th Cavalry Division and the 1100th Infantry Regiment with two companies of tanks, broke through on February 26 beyond the ground, but the main forces, which fell under the strongest attacks from the air and suffered heavy losses in the horse composition, this was not possible. The next morning, the enemy closed the gap and restored the broken defense sector near Krasnaya Gorka. For ten days, the Slanov group fought in encirclement, without receiving ammunition, food, without communication. 18 people broke through) back and was immediately removed from office for unauthorized withdrawal, "sluggish and indecisive actions." All further attacks towards Lyuban were beaten off by the enemy. On March 8, the war diary of the 18th Army reported 1,093 prisoners and 1,556 Russians killed near Krasnaya Grka. Shortly thereafter, the 13th Cavalry Corps was withdrawn to the rear.

Just as unsuccessful was the Pomeranian operation, entrusted to the 191st Rifle Division with the aim of reaching the Moscow railway, 5 km southeast of Lyuban. The division was instructed to make a covert march through the forests without artillery and convoys, to seize the station of Nomeranye by night attack and, having organized all-round defense, to hold out until the help approached. Divisional Commander Colonel A.I. Starunin tried to prove to the commander of the task force, General P.F. Privalov, the impossibility of conducting an operation without a single weapon, having 30-50 riflemen in the companies, with a supply of food for 5 crackers per soldier, ammunition - 5-7 rounds per rifle and one disc for machine guns and machine guns. On

239

Privalov, these arguments did not work. According to the testimony of the former commander of the commandant's company, I.S. Osipov, "commissar Alekseev ended the conversation something like this: "Okay, we will go, but the Motherland will ask you for the consequences and our death."

On the night of February 21, the regiments managed to seep through the German positions. However, near Pomerania, when leaving the forest, the column of the 191st rifle division was discovered by enemy air reconnaissance, then it was subjected to a sudden artillery raid, as a result of which the only radio was broken and the only radio operator died, German machine guns completed the job. The demoralized regiments took refuge in the forest, there was no turning back. "Failures, losses, hunger and cold severely undermined the morale of not only the fighters, but also the commanders," recalls I.S. Osipov. - Endless, aimless wandering through the forests completely exhausted the physical and moral strength of people. We have lost combat capability."

After the ammunition and food ran out, and it was not possible to establish contact with any of his own, Colonel Starunin decided to curtail the "operation" and ordered the regimental commanders to break the units into small groups and leave the encirclement. Only one regiment and the commandant's company managed to escape. The fate of the division headquarters is unknown. New headquarters

a new divisional commander was recruited by Brigadier Colonel Korkyn, whom we already knew. In February, the Volkhov Front lost another 53,000 people killed and wounded; composition in the Army Group "North" amounted to 38.5 thousand soldiers and officers.

Thus, in early March 1942, units of the 2nd Shock Army advanced 75 km to the west, reaching the Rogavka railway station, and 40 km to the north, 6 km short of Lyuban. The front of the army stretched for 200 km. The order to advance farther and farther, regardless of the flanks, led to the formation of the Luban "bottle" - the territory

240

rii with an area of 3 thousand square kilometers with a narrow neck in the place of the breakthrough. This four-kilometer corridor from the village of Myasnoy Bor to the village of Krechno, which the Germans were constantly trying to cut and expand with the forces of the 52nd and 59th armies, was the only line of communication that would supply the advancing units. On March 1, the enemy began to transfer forces to the base of the neck of the breakthrough. Again, these were not divisions from Denmark and "Greece itself". Von Küchler withdrew troops from near Leningrad: leaving positions in the Uritsk region, the 58th infantry division of General Friedrich Altrichter concentrated south of the Soviet breakthrough, on the northern flank - the SS police division of General Wünnenberg, removed from the Pulkovo directions. At a meeting held on March 2 at Hitler's Headquarters, von Küchler reported on a plan for the destruction of Soviet troops. After the meeting, General Halder wrote in his diary: "Decision: go on the offensive on the Volkhov ... The Führer demands a few days before the start of the offensive to carry out aviation preparations [bombing warehouses and troops in the forests with super-heavy caliber bombs]. Having completed the breakthrough on the Volkhov, one should not waste energy on destroying the enemy. If we throw him into the swamps, it will doom him to death."

The 54th Army stormed Pogostya all winter. For a new offensive, new divisions and marching reinforcements arrived, and an attack group of twelve calculated divisions and 200 tanks was created. The Stavka reinforced the army with the 4th Guards Rifle Corps, which included 1 rifle division, 4 rifle and 1 tank brigades, 3 ski battalions and a rocket artillery battalion. The task remained the same: to advance in the general direction towards Lyuban. The operation began on 28 February. The Soviet formations, regardless of losses, step by step, incredibly slowly, but still began to gnaw through the German defenses towards the 2nd shock army. The battle here was fierce. Finally, we managed to take Pogost'e and advance 12-15 km beyond the railway line.

241

"The battles for the Pogostye station continued for several months," recalls N.N., a former soldier of the 311th Infantry Division. Nikulin - In the morning, the divisions went to storm the railway line, heavily fortified by the Germans, and fell, struck down by machine-gun bursts. Replenishment arrived in the evening. The next morning they again went on the attack and again fell, mowed down by German machine guns. This went on day after day. Heavy snowfalls covered the battlefield. When the snow melted in the spring, stacks of the dead were discovered. Near the ground lay soldiers in summer uniforms, in tunics and boots. They were piled high with marines in pea jackets and wide black bell-bottoms. Above - Siberians in sheepskin coats and felt boots, ready to attack in January-February 1942. Even taller are the "political fighters" in quilted jackets and rag hats issued in besieged Leningrad. On them are bodies in overcoats and camouflage coats, with and without helmets on their heads. The dead of many divisions mixed up here ...

I saw many dead people before and after that, but the spectacle of Pogostya in the spring of 1942 was the only one of its kind! As a symbol of a fierce struggle, cash rose for

"A sailor from the Marine Corps, struck down at the moment of throwing a grenade by a snow-covered field. He froze in a tense position. The brass buttons on the black pea jacket sparkled in the sun. There was also an infantryman who, already wounded, began to bandage his leg and froze, struck down by the New

bullet. The bandage in his hands fluttered in the wind all winter ... This terrible sight was forever imprinted in my memory. In the subconscious it is even stronger: I acquired an unchanging, constantly repeating dream - a pile of dead bodies near the railway ...

Still, they took the guest. First the station, then the village, or rather the place where all this once was. A division of Vyatka peasants came, short, bow-legged, wiry, high cheekbones. "Oh, your mother! Was not!" — they climbed onto the German bunkers, smoked out the Fritz, blew everything up and advanced five hundred meters. It was just what was needed. A rifle corps was thrown into the gap over their bodies,

242

and the army moved forward. And again, German reinforcements stood in her way. And the Headquarters drove all new divisions into attacks doomed to failure. The directive of the Great Leader of All Nations and the Wise Commander was carried out, ordering to defeat Germany in 1942."

A tactic that is quite worthy of being called the "three-row Fedyuninsky", where is the battle-talist Vereshchagin, with his "Apotheosis of War".

By mid-March, the 54th Army managed to advance another 15 km, as the commander modestly noted, "at the cost of great efforts." The Combat Operations Journal of the Army lists the composition of the 11th Rifle Division as of March 13: courses for junior command personnel - 54, barrage detachment - 51, mortar division - 25, 320th rifle regiment - 57, 163rd regiment - 112, 219 th regiment - 27 people. In total, 326 "active bayonets", along with a detachment, which had a slightly different specialization than the fight against enemy firing points. However, it seemed to the Soviet generals that the long-awaited breakthrough had already taken place. It was on this day that Khozin, who was at the headquarters of Fedyuninsky, discussed plans for further actions with Zhdanov and Kuznetsov, who demanded an early "turnaround on Tosno", and confidently promised to lift the blockade of Leningrad before the onset of spring thaw: "a) access to Lyuban - 4 -5 days - 19-20.3; 6) regrouping of troops - two days - 21-22.3; c) the beginning of the offensive in the Tosnensky direction - 23.3; d) exit to the Tosno area - 27-28.3. With comradely greetings KHOZIN.

The situation in the area of Pogostya began to disturb the German command, which at that time was regrouping forces to carry out an operation to "plug" the Luban "bottle". The connection of parts of Klykov and Fedyuninsky, which were separated by 30 km, threatened to encircle six German divisions at once. During the second half of the month, the name of the Russian village of Pogostye was mentioned eleven times in the diary of General Halder with anxiety and suspense. But everything worked out: the 269th Infantry held out.

243

Then reinforcements arrived in time, and the Germans stabilized the situation by well-thought-out counterattacks by March 30.

"The most difficult thing for me was near Pogost in the winter of 1942," General Fedyuninsky admitted twenty years later. "Four months of exhausting, bloody, and most importantly, unsuccessful battles in the wooded and swampy region between Mga and Tikhvin left me with painful memories forever." In March, the 54th Army suffered the greatest losses - 43,000 fighters - without completing its assigned task, but recapturing 400 square kilometers of marshy forest and two villages - Zenino and Konduyu - from the enemy. The front of the army that found itself in the "bag" ran along the line: the Dubok stream northwest of Pogost - the villages of Venyagolovo - Makaryevskaya hermitage - Smerdynia - Korodnya - Lipovik - Dubovik and further by rail. It was not possible to take these villages, despite numerous attempts.

The 59th Army, fulfilling the directive of the front to intercept the Chudovo-Novgorod highway and railway north of Spasskaya Polist, tried to cut off the German "finger" - a narrow strip

positions that could be shot through, not exceeding 3-4 kilometers in width, stretching from Tregubovo to Mostki.

On March 14, the 2nd shock recaptured Krasnaya Gorka, and this was the last success.

Fascinated by the organization of breakthroughs and defeats, our command did not notice that the enemy was preparing an adequate response,

On March 15, the Germans, having completed the concentration of shock fists, with the support of aviation of the 1st Air Fleet, launched Operation Raubtir, and by the end of March 18, with counter strikes from the north and south, they blocked the throat four kilometers west of Myasny Bor, cutting the communications of the 2nd shock army. Now her connection with the bases

244

The supply was carried out only by air - by U-2 training aircraft. The united units of the Wehrmacht were united in the battle group "Wunnenberg" and immediately set about equipping a cut-off position along the Polist and Glushitsa rivers.

The unpleasantly shocked Supreme Commander ordered Meretskov to leave for the troops and personally organize a breakthrough, and at the same time "completely defeat and destroy the counter-attacking units of the enemy." Fierce fighting began to restore the corridor. "Within 10 days," recalled the former commander of the 376th Rifle Division, hastily transferred from the 4th Army, Lieutenant General G.P. Isakov, — the division repelled counterattacks of superior enemy forces. The fight for the neck was not for life, but for death. I was then a young commander, and, frankly, there were such critical moments when it seemed that the limit had come - swamps, water, cold, continuous raids by dive bombers and flurries of machine-gun and artillery fire on a crowded, as if on a patch, nothing at all. grouping covered from the air; everywhere a mass of unburied corpses, both of our own and of the enemy — all this fell on the shoulders of those who were responsible for the execution of the zalacha and stood to the death."

Having thrown into battle five rifle divisions, two rifle divisions, the 7th Guards Tank Brigade and all the units at hand, up to the courses of junior lieutenants and the training company of junior commanders, Meretskov partially complied with Stalin's order and on March 29 reported that "cha- The enemy forces straddling the road were thrown back in the northern and southern directions. The next day, continuing to please the Kremlin with "cheerful reports," the Front's Military Council reported that "the liquidation of the enemy that had broken through at the junction of the 52nd and 59th with the support of 450 artillery and mortar barrels and two heavy guards jet regiments, it will resume a decisive attack on Lyuban. At the same time they promised to liberate Novgorod soon.

245

In fact, the "road" cleared of the Germans was a narrow strip of forest and muddy swamps, through which only small groups of fighters and carts could get through, and then mostly at night. "The corridor seemed to be pulsing," recalls General I.T. Korovnikov — sometimes narrowing, sometimes expanding. But in diameter it was no longer 11-14 kilometers, but only two and a half - two, sometimes shrinking to several hundred meters. Aimed fire was increasingly replaced by point-blank shots. Hand-to-hand fights often ensued. The participants in the battle believe that until May 30, 1942, the day when "the neck slammed shut tightly," the Germans blocked it at least six times.

The path leading north of Myasny Bor, our soldiers began to call the Devil's Bridge, and the swampy area between the rivers Polist and Glushitsa - the Valley of Death. Lines of porters stretched along the isthmus, which was being shot through, delivering shells and crackers. It was them that Meretskov had in mind when he reported that transports with food, fodder and ammunition again went to the 2nd shock army. German soldiers sitting in the "sleeve"

cut-off position, put a calligraphic sign at the entrance: "Here begins the hall of the world."

Where the waves of the Volkhov grunt day and night, Where the Stalinist organ plays music for us, Where the fragments whistle all night long, This is our homeland - the ass of the world.

By the way, while Meretskov "successfully liquidated" the enemy near Myasny Bor, on March 24, west of the village of Glushitsy, the Germans surrounded the 378th rifle division, which, after the death of Dorofeev, was led by Colonel G.P. Lilenkov, and the regiment of the 111th division (renamed by this time into the 19th Guards). The Soviet units took up all-round defense in a forest area measuring 1.5 by 2 kilometers, suffering colossal losses from ferocious bombing and continuous shelling, and in moments of calm

246

"political workers, leaders of party organizations, held conversations with the soldiers." They stayed in this position for exactly a month, until the survivors "with the permission of the command", having covered 8 kilometers through the swamps, reached the Olkhovsky farms.

And the Red Army soldiers of the 2nd Shock Army stood to death on the borders of the Luban "bottle", defending "a vast wooded and swampy region liberated from the Nazis" (!), Where there were neither roads nor cities, nor important strategic objects. The losses of the Volkhov Front in March amounted to 40,679 people.

Promised by Meretskov, the "decisive offensive" bogged down almost immediately. From the reports of the inspectors from the higher headquarters and political departments, we can conclude that the troops on the front line, exhausted by the wonderful organization, disorganized and abandoned by their own command, were pretending to be active:

"I checked the readiness of units of the 330th rifle division, including up to the battalion, and found: the 92nd regiment was late by more than 1.5 hours, because at 8.00 people began to be fed breakfast; in the 4th bp the battalion of the first echelon received the task of clearing the forest, lost its bearings and began to advance on the CI of the division (/). In 259, the companies and battalions did not know the task well, and when taking up their starting position, machine guns were installed in our direction by one of the companies. In addition, in 259 sp, the artillery fire was planned on its own, while the infantry advanced on its own. The offensive front of each division is 200-500 m. The rest of the sectors were named by the command as fettering and no one attacked them ... During the battle, no one directs the actions of the infantry, since most commanders from division to battalion sit in dugouts, with the exception of 259 rep. ".

Front and army artillerymen conduct their own war. They do not know where the enemy is, and they do not want to know, they simply shoot at the sound or "in that direction", at the heads of the "Hans" or "Ivans" - as God wills, throwing hundreds of tons of precious shells in vain and

247

constantly complaining about the lack of ammunition; busy with some private affairs

pilots:

"Firing at detected targets with ground surveillance results in aimless consumption and overexpenditure of shells. The corrective aviation unit of the artillery department of the army was inactive. .

During the entire period of hostilities (!) aviation did not take a single photograph of the enemy's resistance centers and firing points, as a result of which the photobatteries of the regimental RGCs were inactive. The artillery department of the army, knowing this, never once raised the issue with the air force department about the production of photographs from the air, as well as about detecting enemy firing points by fire flashes at night.

The result is the picture "Assault on the village of Krutik by the 19th Guards Division": "Before the start of the offensive, the forefield, the front line of the enemy's defense and his fire system were not reconnoitered. Artillery did not destroy the enemy fortifications and did not suppress his fire points.

The advancing units turned out to be unprepared to overcome enemy engineering obstacles in the strip

.foreground. For example, the 1218th Guards Rifle Regiment,

having reached the wire fences, he could not overcome them due to the lack of scissors for cutting the wire. The 697th sapper battalion (!/) attached to the regiment did not have any scabbards, although there are quite a sufficient number of them in the rear depots. Due to the fact that passages were not made in the barriers, the 1218th regiment had to make a half-kilometer detour under enemy fire. In addition, the opponents of the same battalion did not neutralize anti-personnel and anti-tank mines, and the enemy minefields were not overcome ...

There was no interaction between the military branches. During the attack on the village of Krutik, the infantry of the 1218th regiment broke away from the tanks and lay down, leaving them without support. The tanks that broke into the village were forced to return, having lost three vehicles. The escort artillery could not satisfy all the demands of the infantry, as it did not have enough ammunition. Therefore were not suppressed

248

We are enemy batteries of anti-aircraft guns and heavy machine guns in the village of Zapolye, which continuously fired at the flank of the advancing 1347th regiment.

There were instances of panic and provocation in parts of the group. In the 2nd battalion of the 1347th regiment, one of the soldiers shouted: "We are surrounded. Random shooting rose, confusion appeared among the fighters. The first battalion was sent to liquidate the non-existent encirclement, which was separated from the performance of the direct combat mission within an hour because of this. Since by this time most of the middle command personnel were out of action, the panic that had arisen was liquidated slowly, and its immediate culprits remained undetected.

The commanders, on the basis of interrogations of prisoners taken from the German consolidated battle groups, revealed an incredible number of "pinned down" enemy divisions. After the war, they will refer to their own fake reports as archival documents: "Enemy forces can be judged because by the end of April 1942, the troops of the 59th Army were opposed by up to ten infantry (!?), one motorized division and three SS regiments supported by strong artillery and mortar groups." (Archive of the USSR Ministry of Defense, f. 416, op. 10437, d. 13, l. 8.) Then, of course ... On April 8, the front commander asked the Headquarters for permission to stop the attack. Not for long, four days.

In April, a thaw set in, then heavy rains came, washing away the "column paths" trodden in the snow, the only road supplying the army with everything necessary turned into a mess, and the surrounding area into a continuous swamp. Lakes, numerous rivers and streams burst their banks. Water flooded the positions and dugouts, the soldiers moved into huts and log cabins, wooden decks were built for the cannons. The vehicles were finally measured. Only cartridges for small arms and small-caliber mines were delivered to the troops. Artillerymen with whole divisions were removed from the front line

249

and went to the rear to provide themselves with fire supplies: if the mountain does not go to Mohammed, then Mohammed goes to the mountain.

"Only the commanders of the guns and the gunner remained at the guns," recalls P. Dmitriev, "everyone else was at work. Teams were constantly sent to the rear warehouses, and this is 50-55 km there and back. But such a march was made in 5-6 days. Our one projectile and charge to it weighed about 30 kg. This means that one person could bring maximum only one projectile and charge, and the second carried food, which was eaten by most during the march. So the result of such campaigns was extremely modest.

By decision of the Military Council, for the supply of food and the removal of the wounded, the construction of a narrow-gauge railway from Novaya Kerest to Myasny Bor began. It was laid by army and front-line road builders, attracting the local population. From the positions to the rear, lezhnevkas were taken out. At night, the fighters felled the forest, laid logs through the swamps, laid wooden decks on them - everything, in the presence of a lack of fastening material.

Without a single nail. Before that, no comprehension

there was no activity to create a network of communications for the supply and transfer of troops, there was no road service, and they did not gather to build a front-line road, because no one expected that they would have to sit in the Volkhov swamps for two whole years. What kind of maneuver by forces and surprise could there be if, for example, the 15-kilometer march in its own rear from Mostki to Glushitsa took ten days for the 378th Infantry Division.

The political administration of the front took the initiative and proclaimed a movement to collect "ownerless and trophy property." Indeed, along with the snowdrops, mountains of scattered weapons and ammunition came out, mostly of Soviet production. Within a month, three 76-mm, four 45-mm and one 105-mm guns, 34 easel, 87 light machine guns, 43

mortar,

250

13 anti-tank rifles, 3,737 rifles, 187 machine guns, 7,600 shells, more than 7,000 mines, 5,180 grenades, 236,400 rifle cartridges, 10,450 PPSH cartridges, 112 anti-tank grenades, four vehicles, two aircraft and much more. All their own, domestic. Trofeev turned out to be unlike the smaller one: two tanks, two cars, two guns, five motorcycles, four bicycles, 8 light machine guns, 4 heavy machine guns, 67,000 rifle cartridges, 1,100 anti-tank shells.

The fauna corresponding to the relief came to life. "Damned mosquitoes, flies, lice are our hated enemies. What writer would describe them if he had never been bitten? And I will not forget them until the end of my days," says I.I. Kalabin. - Lice is not a new thing, but on such a scale ... Gray devils ate us eating, with anger, completely covering the body and clothes. They were not crushed - just, if there was a free minute, they shook them off to the ground. They, parasites, managed to live inside each button 5-6 pieces. It's no joke - six months without a bath! And all six months they did not undress.

From the report of the Deputy Head of the Political Directorate of the Volkhov Front, Brigadier Commissar Rnenko to the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army:

"The soldiers of the units of the 191st division are 70% affected by lice. In a separate communications battalion of the 366th division - by 60%, in the 1222nd regiment of the same division - by 50%. Approximately the same situation in other compounds ...

At a meeting of army doctors on the issue of combating epidemiological diseases in units, it was pointed out that a large amount of lice is observed in sanitary battalions and hospitals, and that the medical staff themselves are often unclean ... Many commanders and soldiers do not wash for several months and do not change underwear. Disinfection chambers in most units have not yet been organized. Sanitary control over the cleanliness of fighters and immediate treatment of lice are not practiced ...

The commissariat inertly carries out orders to organize laundries in divisions and to provide units with soap

251

and linen. In the 225th and 267th divisions and the 25th brigade there is absolutely no exchange fund for linen, units of the 191st division have 25% of the required fund.

The units of the 59th Army do not even have a hair clipper."

The fattest 'bloodsucking' soldiers were nicknamed the KV, after the tank.

The lice were followed by outbreaks of typhus.

The situation with food worsened, horse meat ran out: "First, horses died from malnutrition, then people ate them. No wonder they say: a man is more tenacious than a dog. And that's true: the dog sniffs and won't eat. We dug up all the dead horses from under the snow and ate them. From this, the soldiers began to have intestinal disorders. Sometimes you can't take your pants down. A real disaster! The Germans saw everything, because they were nearby, behind some river ten meters wide. What mockery, humiliation, what mockery I had to endure from them—God forbid. The Germans play harmonicas, sing songs, mock: "Russ, kup-kup!" What is it to them: they are in the villages, in a dry place, ams, Ivans, they are fools again. -

There have been cases of suicide. The fighting was conducted mainly in the neck of the "bottle" and in the zone of the 54th Army. Fedyuninsky until the very removal from his post, replacing the bloodless divisions and knocked out tank units, drove and drove his troops through the muddy swamps - to Lyuban. The general did not leave "bad memories" of these battles, probably because he was completely unable to achieve anything by commanding the most powerful grouping, which consisted of ten divisions (3rd Guards, 11, 80, 115, 177, 198, 281, 285, 294, 311th), five rifle (32, 33, 137, 140th, 6th marines), four tank (16, 98, 122, 124th) brigades, a separate ski, five artillery and one guards mortar regiment, separate tank, ski, airdescent battalions.

Sukhomlin's army, spun off from the 54th, in April, on its right flank, unsuccessfully fought for the Settlement

252

No. 8. The left wing (80th Rifle Division, 1st Mountain Rifle Division, 4th Marine, 124th Tank Brigade) tried to break through from Pogost to Shapki and Tosno, but got stuck in the bog at Venyagolovo, barely crossing the river Moscow State University. In a five-day battle, the 1st Mountain Rifle Brigade ceased to exist, commanded by the hero of the "winter war" Ugryumov, according to the descriptions, a man "brave, but illiterate and a heavy drinker", who in two years grew from lieutenants to colonels: "Ugryumov famously paced under fire, but a flute hung from the side played a significant role in his stubborn recklessness ... "

The headquarters of the Volkhov Front, having accumulated "painful EXPERIENCE", AGAIN PREPARED "a general offensive." The commander assured everyone that "to date, the operational situation in the Luban direction, along with the presence of difficulties, is more favorable than in previous periods of operations."

However, the time has come for intrigue and shuffling of the general deck.

Stalin decided back in March that the leadership of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts needed to be changed. He offered Voroshilov to head the Volkhov Front, but the marshal did not want to take responsibility for the "difficult front", bluntly stating that he was afraid of "failing in this matter" (it was easy, without answering for anything, to suspect Koshevoy of cowardice, although Voroshilov in his personal

you can't refuse courage, but he clearly did not show the courage of a commander). The Supreme Commander was finally convinced that in this war the "first red officer" was not his assistant. Lieutenant General L.A. went to Leningrad. Govorov. In Malaya Vishera, in the company of Voroshilov, Malenkov and Deputy Commander of the Red Army Air Force, General Novikov, on March 9, a new deputy commander of the Volkhov Front, "Stalin's commander", Lieutenant General A.A. arrived. Vlasov.

In his post-war memoirs, giving retrospective assessments of events and people with an eye to on the ideal

253

The logical department of the Central Committee of the CPSU, our memoirists, mentioning Vlasov, paint a portrait of mediocrity with the moral character of a potential traitor. Marshal Vasilevsky, for example, reports that "...Vlasov, not distinguished by his great commanding abilities, besides being extremely unstable and cowardly by nature, was completely inactive."

Meanwhile, at the time of his appointment, General Vlasov was at the zenith of his glory, being one of the most promising military leaders of the Red Army. Commanding the 20th Army during the Battle of Moscow, for the successful operation to liberate Solnechnogorsk and Volokolamsk, he was awarded the Order of the Red Banner of Battle, promoted and earned Stalin's special favor. Newspapers wrote a lot and flatteringly about him, his portraits were published. Army General Zhukov highly appreciated Vlasov's fighting qualities, his operational training and organizational skills. And he came to the Volkhov Front "to apply the experience of the victory near Moscow."

Meretskov, of course, did not immediately like the new deputy either: "This adventurer, completely devoid of conscience and honor, did not even think about improving things at the front. With bewilderment, I watched my deputy, who remained silent at meetings and did not show any initiative. Vlasov carried out my orders very sluggishly.

I grew irritated and discontent".

Meretskov's irritation and dissatisfaction is quite understandable: in the short term, Vlasov was to take his place, and both generals knew about it. There is a recording of a telephone conversation between Vlasov and the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, in which he asks to be left in the position of deputy, since Meretskov has extensive experience in combat operations in a wooded swampy area. Already in captivity, Vlasov also described Meretskov rather impartially: "Egoist ... A very nervous, absent-minded person. A calm conversation between the commander of the front and the commanders of the armies was almost impossible."

254

On March 20, the front commander sent his deputy at the head of a special commission to the 2nd shock army, from where he was not destined to return. On April 8, having drawn up an act of verification, the commission departed. Vlasov stayed, because it turned out that General Klykov was seriously ill. According to Meretskov, the 54-year-old army commander was seriously ill back in February, this was reflected in the performance of his duties, and "I had the idea of replacing the army commander more than once." However, at that time, Kirill Afanasyevich did not remove General Klykov from the army, but removed from his post a completely healthy chief of staff and head of the operations department. The chief of artillery, General Degtyarev, who published his memoirs before Meretskov, still did not know anything about the Marshal's diagnosis, so he did not notice deviations in the commander's health, and directly connected his removal from office with military failures and the work of inspectors from the front headquarters:

"... the act of the commission was read out, and by the evening she left the army.

"That's all," said Klykov gloomily, saying goodbye to her, and mechanically began sorting through the contents in the drawers of his desk.

The foreboding did not deceive him: a few days later he was dismissed from the post of commander of the 2nd shock army.

On April 16, the "seriously ill" Klykov was sent by plane to the rear.

The question naturally arose: who should be entrusted with the leadership of the troops of the 2nd shock army? On the same day, a telephone conversation took place between Vlasov and division commissar I.V. Zueva with Meretskov. Zuev proposed to appoint Vlasov to the post of commander, Vlasov - the chief of staff of the army, Colonel P.S. Vinogradov. The military council of the front supported the idea of Zuev. So the "vile traitor to the Motherland" Vlasov became the commander of the 2nd shock army on April 20, while remaining at the same time the deputy commander of the front. He received troops practically no longer able to fight, an army that needed to be spa

255

sat. Since mid-April, less than half of the norm was given out, there were no other products at all. The shortage in divisions reached 70%. Artillery was deprived of shells. Frostbitten, starving, lice-ridden fighters sat for weeks and months in swampy swamps. To kill his soldier, our general did not necessarily need the Germans.

Vlasov could not refuse the appointment, although he perfectly understood in what ass he was shoved. "In a conversation with Zuev and Vinogradov," Major I. Kuzin, a former general's adjutant, said during interrogation, "Vlasov repeatedly said that the great strategists — he was at the address of Comrade Meretskov — led the army to death. Vlasov addressed Meretskov as follows: the rank is great, but the abilities ... - and further kept silent, but made it clear. Meretskov at that time was reporting on a "gap in the enemy's defenses", on a 75,000-strong grouping that he would soon encircle and destroy, but "the planned offensive was not destined to take place."

[General Khozin, with the arrival of Gyuorov in Leningrad, found himself in the same position as the commander of the Volkhov Front, turned his combination. He reported to Stavka that the main reason for the failure of the Luban operation was the lack of interaction between the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts: "We are acting separately. In January, the Volkhov Front launched an offensive, the Leningrad Front was unable to really support it, because the troops of 54 A were exhausted in human and material terms. In February, the Volkhov Front was exhausted. Leningradsky accumulated strength. At the end of February and in March, the Leningrad Front began to advance, but, not supported by the Volkhov Front, it also ran out of steam. The other day, Volkhovsky began to advance again, Leningradsky was not able to support, because the divisions of the 54th Army were exhausted. Such a situation cannot be recognized as tolerable in the future. Actions must be simultaneous, which would not allow against

256

no one to maneuver their reserves and fend off our blows.

Conclusion: the fronts must be united, entrusting the business of breaking through the blockade to one single commander, specifically, General Khozin.

Marshal B.M. Shaposhnikov opposed such a proposal, but Stalin took the position of a cunning commander, and on April 20 a directive was signed to transform the Volkhov Front into a task force within the Leningrad Front. Army General Meretskov, together with the accumulated "experience", was sent to the Western direction, deputy to Zhukov.

On April 23, General Khozin appeared in Malaya Vishera with "a directive in his pocket and in a very cheerful mood."

Meretskov, on his way to his new destination, visited Headquarters and reported to Stalin that the 2nd Shock Army "was completely exhausted and, in its existing composition, can neither attack nor defend. Its communications are under the threat of attacks by German troops. If nothing is done, then disaster is inevitable." One of two decisions must be made: either to significantly strengthen the army with troops and equipment, or to withdraw it as quickly as possible to the Chudovo-Novgorod road line. Kirill Afanasyevich was promised to take into account the expressed considerations.

Lieutenant General Govorov became the commander of the Leningrad Group of Forces. Generals Fedyuninsky and Galanin were assigned to the Western Front. Major General A.M. Sukhomlin and Major General I.T. Korovnikov. The 8th Army was received by Lieutenant General F.N. Starikov. After the organizational and personnel reform, the commander of the united front and at the same time the Volkhov group of troops could fully concentrate on the Luban direction. To do this, Khozin had 39 divisions, 14 rifle and 6 tank brigades, 15 separate battalions, 24 separate artillery and 7 guards mortar regiments, consisting of 6 armies and 3 corps, in which there were 356 thousand

257

fighters and commanders, 4328 guns and mortars, 191 tanks, despite the fact that since the beginning of the operation, the Soviet troops have lost 308,367 people killed and wounded - almost 100% of the original composition.

Leningraders survived the first military winter, the most terrible. The highest death rate reached in early February. On some days 4500-4700 inhabitants died. In February, 96,000 people died. The peak of cannibalism fell on the same month - 612 people were arrested "for eating human meat" (in total, more than 2 thousand were caught until the spring of 1943). In Sestroretsk and at Razliv station, a gang of six female cannibals operated for three months. The current German Themis has been looking for a suitable article for a homosexual cannibal for half a year; the Soviet, not tormented by the intricacies of jurisprudence "under conditions of a special situation", sculpted for everyone article 59-3 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR - banditry. At first, by decision of the Military Tribunal, they were shot without exception. Later, they began to distinguish between murders "for the purpose of eating the meat of the dead" and "just "eating cadaverous meat", in the second case, according to the same article - by analogy - they were given up to 10 years in prison. It is interesting that 41% of those prosecuted for these crimes were the hegemony-workers, and employees who received half the rations - only 4.5%.

The city was literally littered with corpses, mostly "not absolutely necessary" citizens. "If in December a significant part of the dead was transported to the cemetery by the population, then in January this dropped sharply," said A. Karpushenko, head of the Department of Communal Services of the Leningrad Executive Committee. "The phenomenon has taken on large proportions when the dead began to be thrown en masse to hospitals, clinics, thrown onto stairs, into yards and even on the streets of the city. Organizations and enterprises took out the corpses of dead people from the city and, fearing that the administration of the cemeteries would not accept them, due to the lack of documents, they

258

they poured corpses unnoticed by the watchmen in the cemeteries or the streets near them. On Kremenchugskaya street at the outer doors of the deceased hospital. Botkin daily randomly in a heap lay the abandoned dead. In addition, they could often be seen in the mornings thrown to the gates of houses, on the stairs. The apparatus of the Administration of the Funeral Business trust, despite the additional progressive distribution of bread and vodka to workers, turned out to be unprepared for such a scale.

"For failure to take measures to procure the required number of spare trenches and streamline the work of cemeteries" before the New Year, the head of the trust was arrested and sentenced to eight years

Koshman, But this was only the beginning: "The last days of January and February were the period when the number of burials reached its highest point. A large number of corpses accumulated in hospitals, hospitals, evacuation centers and district morgues ... For a significant number of days in February, only 6-7 thousand corpses per day were brought to the Piskarevskoye cemetery for burial ... On February 3, 1942, the Executive Committee of the Leningrad City Council decided about the use of a sand pit at the Bogoslovsky cemetery for a mass grave, which was filled within 5-6 days with 60 thousand corpses of people. Bomb craters at the Bogoslovsky cemetery were also used for burial, in which about 1000 corpses were buried. Later, it was decided to use part of the anti-tank ditch for burial, located next to the quarry on the north side, where more than 10 thousand dead were also buried. On the northern outskirts of the Serafimovsky cemetery, the existing 18 wolf pits, prepared as anti-tank obstacles, were used for burial, and about 15,000 corpses were buried in them. But the rate of arrival of corpses at the cemeteries significantly outstripped the rapidly growing pace of trench preparation, and therefore the implementation of measures to use the quarry and wolf pits for burial did not eliminate the disproportion between the presence of ready-made trenches and the delivery of corpses to the cemetery. On Pi

259

In the Skaryovo cemetery, the number of unburied corpses, stacked in piles up to 180-200 meters long and up to 2 meters high, due to the absence of trenches, reached 20-25 thousand on certain days of February; at the Serafimovsky cemetery, the morgue and the church were filled with corpses, and some of them simply lay in the cemetery. A stack of about 5,000 corpses also lay at the Bolsheokhtinsky cemetery, where the mortuary was completely filled with corpses. At the cemetery of the Victims of the 9th of January, about 3,000 unburied corpses lay in a hay barn. This situation in the cemeteries lasted until the end of February 1942 ... "

Certainly, all sorts of philologists, historians, art critics and other intellectuals in the humanities turned out to be unnecessary for the authorities, they were not evacuated and were not fed (only academicians and corresponding members were fed). More than 100 professors and associate professors died of starvation and disease at Leningrad University. The Polytechnic Institute lost 46 doctors and candidates of science, the Construction Institute - 38. When the Hermitage was finally taken out in April, MPVO employees found

„Lah building 109 corpses.

In March, another 81.5 thousand people died in the city, in April - about 75 thousand. This is data from the monthly special reports of the NKVD, but they are far from complete. Tens of thousands of Leningraders died during the evacuation or soon after. Thousands of corpses, in shelters, trenches, under the snow, were discovered during the general cleaning of the city in order to prevent epidemics that began with the advent of spring.

How many inhabitants died of starvation, no one knows for sure, but today everyone agrees that at least one million people. The same A. Karpushenko, summing up his secret report, admitted: "K. Unfortunately, there is no organization in the city that could give the exact number of people who died in the city of Leningrad... No one was not only prepared for such a size of mortality and lightning speed of its growth, but no one could even think of anything like that. .. According to cemeteries

260

of a kind, far from accurate, possibly overestimated, they buried 1,093,695 dead for the period from 1/ UN-1941 to 1/UN-1942,"

Most of these victims fell on the first blockade winter.

The situation in Leningrad affected the combat capability of the troops of the front. For eight months, starting from November 1941, more than

62,000 military personnel diagnosed with alimentary dystrophy, of which 12,416 people have died.

However, the city persevered. overturning all the calculations of the German generals.

Gradually, with incredible difficulties, the work of the Military Highway was adjusted. The relocation of the supply base from Tikhvin to Voybokalo and Zhikharevo greatly reduced the route of vehicles. On January 18, the plan for the delivery of goods to Leningrad was fulfilled for the first time. In the second half of January, in connection with the improved delivery, there was a noticeable increase in food supplies. From January 24, Leningraders began to receive 400 grams of bread for a work card, 300 grams for employees, and 250 grams for children's and dependent cards. On February 11, the grain norm increased by another 100 grams. Supply rates for other foodstuffs were also increased. Meat, butter, cranberries, dry onions began to be issued according to the cards.

In mid-February, by decision of the State Defense Committee, the Voibokalo-Kobona railway line was built, bringing trains close to Ladoga. More and more cargo was delivered via the ice road to Leningrad: about 53,000 tons were transported in January, more than 86,000 tons in February, and more than 118,000 tons in March. This made it possible to concentrate in the city two months of untouchable food supplies and carry-over stocks for 6-8 days.

At the same time, the disabled population, the wounded, factory equipment, and cultural values were taken out. In the period from January 22 to April 15 from Leningrad

261

554 thousand people were evacuated, including only in the second half of March - 48 thousand Finns, Germans and a socially dangerous element, carefully "provided with a special escort of the NKVD" and money for food. Beyond Ladoga, hunger ended for them, but as a result of irreversible changes, Leningraders died by the thousands along the entire route.

The population fell to 1.1 million.

The living conditions have improved. To a large extent, the sewerage network and water supply were restored, schools were opened, and a number of cinemas in the city resumed operation. On April 15, the trams began to move again. Thorough party bosses, making sure that the city held out, cheered up and began to tighten the screws. So, the secretary of the city committee Ya.F. Kapustin announced that "...the receipt by Leningraders of the average monthly salary in conditions when the absolute majority of enterprises were inactive, corrupted a certain part of the people, the people ceased to respect discipline." Well, you can't rely on an ungrateful people in anything, they corrupted in the blockade, while

„The “kapustins” and “popkovs”, without closing their eyes, took care of his happiness. -

In the most difficult period for Leningrad, the Road of Life played a decisive role in supplying the city and evacuating the population. It was only thanks to her that Leningrad managed to survive.

The road was serviced by 17,281 servicemen, 3,624 vehicles, 147 tractors, 960 horses. All this economy was managed by the captain of the 2nd rank M.A. Nefedov. Ground protection of the route was carried out by a separate rifle regiment, the main forces of which were concentrated on the ice of Lake Ladoga, 8-12 km from the coast occupied by the enemy. The regiment created two defensive lines, on which pillboxes were built, shelters from ice blocks, and machine-gun points were installed. The air defense of communications was provided by the batteries of the 21st anti-aircraft artillery battalion located in a checkerboard pattern along its entire length, which had

262

fourteen 37-mm machine guns and up to 40 machine-gun mounts, as well as five regiments of fighter aviation. With the strengthening of the ice on the lake, even 85-mm guns were installed. In addition, nomadic groups were created from small-caliber guns and anti-aircraft machine guns mounted on special skids. Railway stations and bases on the banks of Ladoga were covered by special separate anti-aircraft units and air defense armored trains. The sky was guarded by five regiments of the Air Force of the front, two regiments of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet and air defense aviation. The control over the ice regime and the operation of the route was entrusted to the hydrographic service of the Baltic Fleet.

Over the entire period of the existence of the Road of Life, more than 360,000 tons of cargo were transported along it, including 262,000 tons of food and 32,000 tons of ammunition.

In mid-April, the ice thickness on Lake Ladoga began to decrease rapidly, water appeared on its surface, and cracks hidden under it presented a particular danger. From April 16 to April 21, vehicles were moving through continuous water. One of the last to cross Ladoga to the eastern shore were 1,000 replacement soldiers for the 54th Army. At 4 pm on April 24, the road was closed. Preparations for summer navigation were in full swing.

In April, ice drift began on the Neva. He cut off the "piglet" garrison - the 330th rifle regiment of the 86th division under the command of Major S.A. Blokhin - from the left bank. The German command decided to take advantage of this circumstance and liquidate the Nevsky bridgehead. On April 24, after heavy bombing and artillery preparation, the attack of six battalions of the 1st division began. Despite the desperate resistance of the defenders, who received two companies of the 284th regiment as reinforcements, the Germans managed to break through to the Neva and isolate the garrison. The last thing they saw from the right bank was a piece of camouflage, on which it was written in large letters: "Help."

263

Non-commissioned officer V. Buff from the 227th Infantry Division, who corrected artillery fire in those days, wrote in his diary: "When the bridgehead was already in our hands, the Russians made a hopeless attempt to cross the Neva in boats in order to go to counterattack. What was not destroyed during the crossing was completed during the expulsion. You don't know what to be more surprised at: the madness of those who gave the order for this hopeless operation, or the courage of the suicide bombers who carried it out." April 29 Nevsky "piglet" fell. It cost the Leningrad Front 140 thousand dead - all in vain.

Despite the fact that none of the operations of the winter campaign achieved the set decisive goals, Stalin and his commanders still thought that the Red Army was strong enough to defeat the Wehrmacht with mighty blows, which for some reason they considered no longer capable of serious resistance. This was confirmed both by a significant increase in military production and by the fantastic figures of German losses provided by the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff, which drew information from the victorious reports of the Soviet Information Bureau. Therefore, the Soviet Headquarters decided to continue the general strategic offensive in all directions, offensive operations were planned near Leningrad, in the Demyansk region, in the Smolensk, Kursk directions, in Karelia and on the southern wing of the Soviet German front in order to eventually reach the line of the state border of the USSR, the Karelian Front, in particular, developed an offensive operation to break through the defense of the Finns in the Medvezhyegorsk direction with access along the northern shore of Lake Ladoga to the rear of the enemy troops on the Karelian Isthmus. Hitler outlined his plans for the summer in Directive No. 41 of April 5, 1942: send all forces to the south, seize the industrial Donbass, the wheat fields of the Kuban, the oil-bearing regions of the Caucasus and deprive the Soviet Union of economic centers vital for waging war. In the north should have taken

264

Leningrad, to finally establish contact with the Finns. But first, the two army groups were to destroy the main forces of the Red Army in the area of Stalingrad by means of deep detours and

cross the Caucasus Range: "The final encirclement of Leningrad and the capture of Ingermanland are postponed until a change in the situation in the area of encirclement or the release of other forces sufficient for this create appropriate opportunities." Prior to this favorable moment, measures were planned as a minimum program to eliminate the Oranienbaum bridgehead.

] May 1942, the Soviet Supreme Commander-in-Chief addressed the Armed Forces with Order No. 130, which stated: "... the entire Red Army to ensure that 1942 becomes the year of the final defeat of the Nazi troops and the liberation of Soviet land from Hitler's scoundrels." The beginning of the defeat was to be put by the Kharkov offensive operation and the destruction of Manstein's troops in the Crimea.

On May 2, the Military Council of the Leningrad Front reported to the Headquarters a plan of action for the coming month, in which it was noted that "the main task of the troops of the front — the liberation of Leningrad from the blockade — will be carried out through a series of successive front-line operations." The plan provided that the 2nd Shock Army would temporarily go over to the defensive on the occupied front. The 191st and 259th Rifle Divisions are detached from its composition and transferred to the 59th Army to create a strike force for the period of the operation to eliminate the enemy in the Tregubovo-Spasskaya Polist area. At the same time, the 2nd Shock Corps is preparing for the continuation of the Luban operation, for which it includes the 6th Guards Corps as part of the 4th and 24th Guards, 165th Rifle Divisions, 24th and 58th Rifle Divisions. brigades, which should be restored by mid-May. Approximately, the 2nd shock army, upon readiness of the 6th guards corps, was supposed to go on the offensive

265

in the last decade of May, simultaneously with the 54th Army. The direction of the main attack of the 2nd shock was planned from the Krivino, Ruchi area to the Babino station in order to cut off and liquidate the Chudovskaya enemy grouping in cooperation with the 59th Army. To develop success, it was planned to use the replenished 13th cavalry corps, the 372nd and 378th rifle divisions. The rate of the proposal of the front approved.

Thus, there was no talk of any withdrawal of the 2nd shock army from the bag, at a time when its position had already become critical, although the army remained a shock army only in name. She could even defend herself with difficulty. In fact, in the encirclement, along with the units of the 52nd and 59th armies that entered the breakthrough, there were more than 62 thousand people without food and 600 guns without shells. There was practically no supply, sometimes the "corn workers", who suffered heavy losses from German fighters, dropped paper bags with crackers, of which most of them broke or disappeared in the swamps, and patriotic leaflets: "Cowards - shoot, brave ones -

praise! Destroy the Nazi invaders...

"Hold on! Help will come to you." The Germans carried out their propaganda: they hung loaves of bread on trees and persuaded them to surrender: "There is only one road from hell to heaven, run across to us!", but there were few defectors (according to the political department, to the side of the enemy in April 47 people left, in May - 17, deserted - 84).

The finished narrow-gauge railway did not last long. The Germans soon bombed the cuckoo locomotives, and the orderlies manually pushed the trolleys with the wounded, putting corpses in place of the uprooted ones.
sleepers.

Only then did it become clear that "the army cannot continue a further offensive against Lyuban.

Khozin, having delved into the situation, was forced to abandon the offensive and take measures to withdraw troops. "The further conduct of operations by the 2nd Shock Army," he reported to the Supreme Commander, "is an extremely risky undertaking and, due to its insecurity at the junction, is very dangerous." Not-

266

it is necessary either to replenish the front with reserves and, to begin with, defeat the enemy in the area of Spasskaya Polisti, or to sound a retreat and save the troops. Khozin himself leaned towards the first option and asked Moscow to "urgently give" the front at least 100 tanks and five aviation regiments. On May 13, a member of the Military Council of the 2nd Shock Army I.V. Zuev flew to Malaya Vishera, reported on the hopeless situation of the army and returned with the directive of the command of the Leningrad Front No. 00120 to begin preparations for the sequential withdrawal of formations to a previously prepared line. Withdrawal begins at the signal "Forward".

In our military history, April 30 is considered the end date of the Lyuban offensive operation, and the start of the operation to withdraw the 2nd shock army from the encirclement dates back to May 13. Accordingly, with this "calculus" is carried out and the calculation of losses. One might think that for two weeks, separating two armor, the soldiers of the Volkhov Front rested at the resort or, having agreed with the Germans on a truce, maliciously sabotaged the execution of order No. 130. But no, it was during this period, according to the memoirs of private I.I. Belikov, laid down the newly arrived, newly formed, 2nd Infantry Division of the 59th Army, which was given the task of breaking through the enemy defenses at Spasskaya Polist without artillery, with a bayonet attack:

"In the early morning of May 1, our regiment launched an offensive. The Katyushga fired a volley of thermite shells, and one of the German firing points died out. We went on the attack. In the very first minutes of the battle, the battalion commander, the chief of staff of the battalion and my platoon commander, junior lieutenant Miroshnikov, were killed. But still, our regiment went 2 km deep into the rear of the Nazis. At the same time, we captured the food warehouse. It was he who turned out to be a trap - the place of death of my fellow soldiers. When we were hungry, like wolves, pounced on food, bombing and shelling began. From our platoon of 25 people, five survived ...

When it got dark, we crawled away to the cemetery of the soldiers of our regiment. Commissar of the regiment - in a new pginel, with three

267

field sleepers in buttonholes - sat under a pine tree. The pine was uprooted by the explosion, and the commissar's head lay on one side of the tree, and his torso on the other. Everywhere the earth was mixed with blood. Alive, with their arms and legs torn off, they ask: "Brother, shoot..."

Throughout the breakthrough of the German defense - 500 m along the front - there was a blockage of corpses and wounded. In the mornings, when there was no bombardment, we took up defensive positions at the forefront. At night, they dragged the corpses and made a flooring out of them so as not to lie in the swamp water. So 10 days passed. They seemed to have forgotten about us: neither food nor ammunition was delivered. On the tenth day I got up early and went to see if any of ours were still alive? The Germans noticed me and yelled: "Ivan, go eat porridge!" But they didn't shoot - they weren't afraid of us at all.

... I asked the junior lieutenant how many were left alive in our regiment and who was now the commander shelf. Kukuev - dirty, hungry - answered that we had only 58 people left and he was for the commander. We had no shells, no cartridges, no food, but we could not leave the front paradise. Behind us, at the Moscow-Leningrad highway, stood a detachment. Leaving the front line was punishable by execution. There were two ways: death or captivity. None of our fighters gave up...

Junior Lieutenant Kukuev allowed me to go to the division headquarters and report to the command about our situation. I got to the headquarters, found the division's communications chief, Major Malofeev, and told him about the situation. And he asks: "Did you save the communications property?" At that time, the loss of property was punishable by execution: a coil of cable was valued more than a human life...

Our division was replenished, but actually re-formed, and again sent to the breakthrough. Other formations fought fierce and unsuccessful battles for the capture of Tregubovo and Priyutino. Only on May 13 did the 59th Army receive an order to "cease active operations and go on the defensive."

268

Finally, on May 14, the Headquarters issued a directive on the withdrawal of the troops of the 2nd shock army "from the area it occupies." It was not about getting out of the encirclement, but about an organized retreat to the line of Olkhovka, which was favorable for defense - Lake Tigoda, regrouping and delivering a strong blow from the west with the forces of two divisions and four rifle brigades towards the 59th Army in order to eliminate the enemy in the ledge Priyutino - Spasskaya Polist. General Korovin had to use six divisions, two rifle and two tank brigades to accomplish this task. The preparation and implementation of the operation was given 7-10 days. Moscow could not help the Volkhovites in any way. The month of May was marked by a series of defeats by the Red Army on all fronts: in the Crimea, Manstein's troops defeated three Soviet armies and captured Kerch, near Kharkov, Kleist's tanks completed the encirclement of twenty-seven divisions of the Southwestern Front, Rzhevsko-Vyazemskaya ended in failure and huge losses (777 thousand killed and wounded) and Demyansk (246 thousand) operations. In the course of the latter - as a contrast with the sulba of the 2nd shock army - von Seydlitz on April 24 successfully released the encircled Brockdorf grouping, and the Germans did not leave the "boiler", but after repulsing all Soviet attacks, they firmly settled in the 40-kilometer (!), with a width of 6-8 km, the Ramushevsky corridor and held Demyansk until February 1943.

At the same time, at the initiative of Zhdanov, the Military Council of the Leningrad Front decided to evacuate the local population along with the retreating army. In Smolny they vaguely imagined what the corridor to the mainland looked like, along which thousands of old people, women and children had to get out. From the peppy reports of the military, it could be assumed that the trains from Myasny Bor were almost on schedule. The villagers, not wanting to evacuate, hid in the forests and vegetable gardens. The detectives caught them, burned more

269

left after the battles and air raids at home, so as not to get to the enemy.

The signal "Forward" sounded only on May 22. Parts of the 2nd shock army successively withdrew from their positions and moved towards Novaya Kerest, further towards the village of Krechno and Myasnoy Bor. The head of the rear of the army reported: "The personnel were exhausted, pushing the materiel out of the marshes towards the narrow-gauge railway and the lay road. Prior to this, for a month and a half, the army was on a starvation ration. There were no stocks of ammunition and food in the army, since there was no supply due to the lack of fuel... in the forest waiting for evacuation". According to Khozin, "the withdrawal of the 2nd shock army is proceeding according to plan, all the wounded have been taken out, the property has been evacuated to the rear."

And this belated "maneuver" by the troops of the Volkhov Front failed. The enemy, clearly following the Soviet preparations, immediately launched active combat operations along the entire perimeter.

“Khozin was slow to carry out the order of the Headquarters,” signaled the assistant head of the Special Department, Senior Major of State Security Moskalenko, “referring to the impossibility of moving equipment off-road and the need to build roads, by the beginning of June this year. the units did not begin to withdraw, however, to the General Staff of the Red Army signed by KHOZIVNA and the beginning. Staff of the Stelmakh sent a report about the beginning of the withdrawal of army units. As it was later established, KHOZIN and STELMAKH deceived the General Staff, by this time the 2nd shock army was only beginning to delay the rear of their formations. The 59th Army acted very indecisively, made several unsuccessful attacks, and the tasks set by the Stavka did not performed”.

Nevertheless, by the middle of the month, they managed to withdraw the 13th cavalry (cavalrymen, having finished eating their horses, went out with saddles on their shoulders), the 6th guards corps, the remnants of the 378th rifle division, tank brigades, jet

270

mortars, partly heavy artillery - they were the first to move in accordance with the plan to continue the Luban operation. |

On May 31, the 20th motorized division from the north and the 58th infantry division from the south again blocked the exit to Myasnoy Bor, "tying" 9 divisions and 6 brigades in a bag with three regiments of the RGK of the 2nd shock, 52nd and 59th Army - about 50 thousand people. 19] the 1st and 382nd rifle divisions managed to jump out of the "cauldron" VISIONS.

Energetic measures to restore the communication of the encircled grouping were not taken by the Soviet command in a timely manner (with the exception of Khozin's telegram to Vlasov to "organize and decisively" strike from west to east), which gave the enemy the opportunity to organize a defense saturated with firing points one and a half kilometers deep along the eastern bank of the Polist River.

The 22nd and 57th Rifle Brigades and the 191st Division, advanced to the river on May 30-31, could not overcome this line. The 2nd shock army continued to fight in complete encirclement. For defense in the north and west, the most combat-ready formations were left - 267, 92, 327, 19th Guards Rifle Divisions, 23rd Brigade - which ensured the operations of the breakthrough group as part of the 46th and 382nd divisions, 22, 25, 53rd and 57th rifle brigades. The 305th Rifle Division was defending along the northwestern shore of the Zamoshsky swamp to Gorenka, advancing on its left flank together with the breakthrough group. The actions of the Soviet units paralyzed the German dive-bombers, hanging in the air with impunity from dawn until dark. Daylight hours were almost 20 hours. The losses were huge.

Our aviators were able to allocate 10 fighters to cover the troops.

- Thus, the actions of the breakthrough group at first independently, and then with units of the 52nd and 59th armies were not successful, although the Germans held the corridor with the forces of one regiment. The artillery of the encircled group, numbering

271

shaya 874 barrel, was inactive due to the lack of ammunition. In early June, fierce battles began in the army's defense sectors. The enemy squeezed the ring, striking in the directions of Finev Lug and from the Pyatilipy region. The 2nd shock army made desperate attempts to break out of the bag. The 4th Army (44th, 288th, 310th Rifle Divisions) did not stand idle, in which I again changed the commander. Under the leadership of Major General N.I. Gusev, throughout June and the first ten days of July, the army, reinforced by the 185th and 195th tank brigades, 50 tanks each, and artillery, tried to eliminate the enemy's Volkhov bridgehead near Kirishi, five kilometers wide and two kilometers deep. The task was not completed, although only from 4 to 15 June, more than 40 thousand shells and mines were fired at the Kirishi patch, and our aircraft delivered the strongest blows. For this reason, the operation was deleted from Soviet history, the losses are unknown. And what do we know about the battles of the 54th Army in the "Pogostyev bag"? We completely forgot about the newly created 8th Army (128th, 265th, 286th rifle divisions, 1st rifle brigade, 107th tank battalion), has it really not done anything since January? This cannot be, although in the descriptions of the winter campaign it is practically not mentioned anywhere, as if it does not exist at all. There is only one phrase in the encyclopedia: "She fought in the Mginsky direction." Vela, that is. It is clear that they are ineffective.

After the defeats of the Red Army in May, Comrade Stalin became very disillusioned with many of his commanders: Timoshenko, Kulik, Kozlov, Levchenko, Mekhlis; he yearned that he did not have "Hindenburs". It took only a month to realize that General Khozin was not Hindenburg either. The commander of the united Leningrad front was unable to break through the blockade of Leningrad-Grad, was unable to cope with the leadership of nine armies at once, three separate corps and two groups -

272

mi troops, moreover, divided by the territory occupied by the enemy. In principle, given the level of command that existed in the Red Army, this was an overwhelming task for any general. So after all, it was not for this that Khozin started the unification.

The commander did not change his habits, as before, he drank two or three glasses of vodka before lunch and dinner, in the evenings he watched movies in his apartment in the company of young telegraph operators (in the denunciations of a member of the Military Council, army commissar A.I. Zaporozhets, this was classified as "domestic decay", in Khozin's exculpatory letters - as a human attitude "to small workers"), enthusiastically intrigued against Zaporozhets and the head of the Special Department, Melnikov. And he even tried to ignore Smolny, communicating directly with Moscow from Malaya Vishera and independently making fundamental decisions, including on issues of governing Leningrad and distributing city resources. This turned out to be the last straw. The experienced party apparatchik Zhdanov quickly and harshly stopped the "gross political mistake", explaining to Khozin that he again "did not stomp to the point."

By a directive of June 3, General L.A. was appointed commander of the Leningrad Front. Govorov was a unique case for those times: a graduate of the St. Petersburg Konstantinovsky School, a former Kolchak officer who graduated from two academies and himself headed the Dzerzhinsky Military Artillery Academy, due to a misunderstanding he was not shot in the pre-war years, and besides, he was a non-partisan (this, of course, mess, after three weeks the commander was accepted into full-fledged Bolsheviks without candidate experience).

Then the Headquarters recognized the decision to liquidate the Volkhov Front as erroneous. Khozin was relieved of his post "for failure to comply with the order of the Headquarters, separation from the troops, paper-bureaucratic methods of management ...", as well as in connection with a serious conflict with members of the Military Council, and soon went to receive the 33rd

273

army of the Western Front; humor of the Supreme Commander — Meretskov commanded the army.

On June 8, the Stavka reinstated the Volkhov Front and General Meretskov as commander. Together with him, General A.M., Deputy Chief of the General Staff, arrived in Malaya Vishera. Vasilevsky. The two generals were given the task of "rescuing the 2nd shock army from the encirclement, even if without heavy weapons and equipment."

Starting from June 10, large forces of the 59th and 52nd armies, supported by 250 guns and mortars, 60 tanks, and three rocket artillery battalions, continuously attacked the enemy ring from the outside. The 58th and 24th rifle, 7th guards and 29th tank brigades, 2, 374, 165th rifle, 25th and 87th cavalry divisions, separate battalions of other units, courses for lieutenants and a reserve of political workers of the front department.

2nd shock broke through to meet them.

"On June 7, by decision of the Army Armed Forces," Colonel Kresik reported, "80% of the personnel were put into operation, including artillerymen and mortarmen. However, the army was not successful due to the lack of ammunition and poorly organized interaction between the units advancing from the east. There was nothing but cartridges, 45-mm shells and 50-mm mines... The personnel received 30-40 g of crackers a day, the wounded - 70-80 g per person. The only food is horse meat. However, because of enemy aircraft, fires could not be made, and horse meat was eaten raw, without salt. Exhaustion. Mortality in parts, especially in hospitals and among the civilian population ... "

People were swollen with hunger. Needles, foliage, birch bark, alder cones, grass, hedgehogs and frogs, leather parts of ammunition were used for food: "Hunger forced me - and tarpaulin boots went into action. At 23, did I ever think that I would have to eat a whole horse with all the ammunition, bridle

274

coy and tugs? But I had to ... I wanted to live, but there was no life. It would be necessary to die, but death is not walked.

Hunger will spiritually devastate a person, turning him into a lone beast, thoughtless and vicious, ready for any violence. This process is gradually, on the rise, corroding human dignity. A person also changes outwardly: a smile disappears from his face - a dreary frown appears, eyes dart around, teeth are tightly clenched, there are pits-dips on his cheeks, his speech is jerky, like that of a tongue-tied... A hungry person does not remember the past, does not think about bulush . Everything is blunted: the sense of duty, love for one's neighbor, for a compatriot, the laws of morality: only one passionate desire remains - to eat! Not a desire for death, no, but for life. Whatever, but live! To live physically, because spiritually such a person has long since died ... Such is the power of the body over a person, and oh, how difficult it is to overcome it.

Cases of cannibalism were recorded in the army.

By June 14, having driven back the 327th Rifle Division and the 23rd Brigade, the enemy captured Finev Lug. The 19th Guards (former 366th) Division withdrew to the area of Glukhaya Keresti, but the defensive line here was not prepared in advance. On the site of the 92nd Infantry Division, the Germans captured Olkhovka and reached the line of the Omutny Creek. During June 17-20, the rearguard Soviet units were pushed back to the border of the Trubitsa River and the Barskaya Kanavka stream.

Judging by the memoirs of Meretskov, he again, as in March, managed to break through the corridor: "Finally, the Germans could not stand it. On June 19, the 29th Tank Brigade broke through the German defenses and joined forces with the troops of the 2nd Shock Army. Two days later, a corridor 300-400 meters wide along the railway was pierced by a blow from the east and west. Using this corridor, a large group of wounded soldiers and commanders came out to Myasnaya Bor. Then something happened that I feared the most. Parts of the 2nd shock army that participated in the breakthrough, instead of directing their efforts to expansion

275

breakthrough and securing the flanks, they themselves pulled after the wounded. At this critical moment, the command of the 2nd shock army did not take measures to secure the flanks of the corridor and failed to organize the withdrawal of troops from the encirclement. The Germans, having quickly sorted out the situation, on the second day, after a massive strike of their aircraft and artillery, again occupied the defensive structures on the right bank of the Polist River and thereby prevented the exit of our troops.

It is strange that neither the Germans, nor the circled themselves, who allegedly used the corridor, noticed this. In a radiogram dated June 20, Vlasov and Zuev reported:

"To the head of the General Staff. Chief of Staff of the Front. Copy: Korovnikov and Yakovlev. Please understand that parts of the eastern group are so bloodless that it is difficult to isolate escorts for tanks. The enemy defense along the Polist River was not violated. The position of the enemy is unchanged. The infantry of the 52nd and 59th armies did not reach the Polist River from the east. Our units are pinned down by enemy fire and have no advance. I ask for instructions to attack the infantry of the 52nd and 59th armies from the east. The 11 tanks that have broken through have no shells." Vasilevsky offered on the radio to send an airplane for the Military Council of the Army and take it out of the encirclement, but Vlasov categorically refused the airplane, declaring that his place was in his troops.

Only on June 22, the slaughterhouses of the 2nd shock battalion, staggering from hunger, managed to break through the German positions from their side. Until noon on June 23, 6018 wounded and about 1000

relatively healthy. The first were sent to the hospital, of the second they formed a combined detachment under the command of Colonel Korkin, who was again driven into the Valley of Death.

The Germans then blocked the breakthrough. With a blow in the direction of the narrow-gauge railway, they broke through the front and captured New Kerest. The area occupied by Soviet troops was reduced to such a size that it was shot through by German artillery to the full depth. Knot

276

communication was broken, control is broken. The army lost the only platform where food and ammunition delivered by aircraft were received.

"June. Northern white nights," recalls an eyewitness. "For a whole day, German planes hovered over us, dropping super-heavy bombs, pouring machine guns. Not ceasing, the cannonade hummed. You can become deaf from the crackling of breaking, burning trees, from the thunder and roar of artillery fire, the hellish tap dance of machine-gun bursts, the hysterical howl of mines. Each bullet hits the target, the projectile hits the target and the bomb also hits the target, because the crowding of troops is incredible. That is no longer an army, but a market crowd. Complete confusion, communication between parts is lost, control is broken. There is no obedience, even respect for commanders. There is no information about our situation, only enemy propaganda was outrageous... No villages, no roads, only fragments of logs and logs sunk in the swamp, once brought by sappers, but now completely destroyed. People rush between them, looking for a suitable shelter. The forest is burning, the peat is smoking... there are craters everywhere, mutilated trees, heaps of unnecessary rifles, mangled barrels, trolleys and corpses, corpses everywhere. Thousands of fetid corpses, completely covered with flies, decomposing in the June sun ... On every bump, where it is drier, there are wounded. Screams and groans, pleas for help. Who asks for a drink, who begs to kill, and no one cares about them. Indifferent, gloomy, half-mad people in wadded sweatshirts and tightly tied earflaps wander through the forest (after all, mosquitoes and flies climb less), with red eyes swollen from insomnia. What dream can be in a boiling hell?..

Almost no one has a watch, time has long been lost. Is it day or night? What day is it, what date? What awaits us - captivity or an attempt to break through?

On June 23, the Germans reached the Gluptitsa River, on the 24th they occupied the Drovyanoe Pole, cutting the log rail and the narrow gauge railway, on which the materiel and the wounded were concentrated. Further advance of the enemy was suspended

277

support groups created from rear units that took up defensive positions along the eastern bank of the Kerest River.

Meretskov cut through "virtual" corridors again and again: "The night of June 24 has come. At 23.30, the troops of the 2nd shock army began to move. Tanks of the 29th tank brigade came out to meet them with armored landings, supported by artillery of the 59th and 52nd armies... By morning, a small corridor formed along the narrow gauge railway and the first groups of fighters and commanders emerged from the encirclement. They staggered from exhaustion. The withdrawal of troops continued until noon, but then stopped. The Germans managed to take control of the road. By evening, the forces of the troops operating from the east again broke through the corridor and cleared the road. Through this passage, shot through by crossfire from two sides, during the night and morning of June 25, the fighters and commanders of the 2nd shock army continued to exit.

Vasilevsky, a representative of the Stavka, reinforces the writings of the front commander with his authority: "As a result, our troops managed to break through a narrow gap and save a significant part of the 2nd shock army."

From the inside of the ring, everything looked different.

"The attack of the breakthrough group, planned on the night of June 24, together with the eastern grouping, was not successful," Major P.F. Khamov. - In the middle of the day, the enemy resumed attacks on the entire front, having initially carried out strong artillery and aviation preparation, broke through our defenses on the Kerest River and began advancing in groups along the narrow-gauge railway (clogged with echelons with equipment) and the log road (clogged with vehicles, artillery)".

"June 24, 1942 00.45. There is no passage, there is nowhere to evacuate the wounded - you are being misled ... I ask for your intervention, "Vlasov's penultimate radiogram appealed. |

On the morning of June 24, enemy machine gunners broke through to the army headquarters, and all command was transferred to the command post of the 57th rifle brigade, then to the 46th rifle division.

278

The Military Council decided at nightfall to break the ring at all costs and get out of the encirclement.

The army headquarters also joined the breakthrough group in the sector of the 382nd and 305th rifle divisions. The leadership of the cover units was entrusted to the deputy commander of the army, Major General P.F. Alferyev, who from the randomly retreating units of the 327th, 267th rifle divisions, the 23rd brigade and partly the 19th guards division tried to organize defense from the west. Property, equipment, documents, weapons were destroyed. At 19.45 the last radiogram went to the front headquarters. At 2300, units of the 382nd Rifle Division, under heavy enemy mortar and machine-gun fire, began an offensive to the east north of the narrow-gauge railway. At midnight, the army headquarters began to move. At the head of the column were two platoons of a company of the Special Department, armed with twelve light machine guns, and a platoon of employees of the Special Department of the NKVD with machine guns. Then they moved: the head of the Special Department A.G. Shashkov, the Military Council, departments of the army headquarters. A platoon of a company of the Special Department brought up the rear. With a hurricane of fire from all types of weapons, the Neppa repulsed the attack. By the morning of June 25, the battle formations of the army were dismembered, command and control was lost.

"From June 22, 1942 to June 25, 1942," the captain of state security Kolesnikov reported, "no one from the 2nd UA didn't come out."

Meretskov and Vasilevsky compiled a summary of the General Staff on this occasion, which stated that "on June 25, by 03:15, by a coordinated attack by the 2nd and 59th armies, the enemy's defenses in the corridor were broken and at 01:00 the units began to leave. 2nd Army".

The corridor consisted of four kilometers of narrow — 250-300 meters — strips of earth and swamps along the railway, shot through. These kilometers were a living wave, where on foot, where crawling, under hurricane artillery and mortar fire of the enemy, exhausted, hungry, dying on the go people, almost incapable of resistance, gathered

279

all the forces just to take one more step to the east. In some places, German machine guns shot them literally point-blank, as if in a shooting gallery. The river Polist was filled to the banks with corpses, the living crawled over the bodies of the dead.

Some of the soldiers and commanders really managed to break through. In a general's foreign speech, this meant that "the enemy's defense was broken." Here is how the 59th Rifle Brigade "broke down the defenses" in the description of the former commander of the artillery unit I. D. Elohovsky: "The withdrawal began on the 24th at one in the morning. Shouts were heard: "Oh, die so die, guys! Go-o-o!!" The crowd surged along the narrow gauge railway. Valka was jumping next to me. I stumbled, fell, and an avalanche of people carried me further ... Many were swept away by the unrestrained crowd. I know that the rivers were on the way - Glushitsa,

Polist. Only I don't remember the water: only slippery human bodies under my feet. I went through the whole war, but I have never seen such a massacre anywhere else. And no free "corridor": the Germans here and there - from all sides. And you run and shoot anywhere on the go. Few remained alive... 32 people left the 59th brigade that day."

But the sisters "come out" from the medical unit: "Finally they found the way. Oh my god, what a ride! Knee-deep liquid mud, a broken narrow-gauge railway all around, everything was strewn with dead bodies, machine guns, various things, even gramophones were lying in the mud. The exit has begun. People were falling everywhere, wounded appeared, at first we tried to carry them. Then we got into such hell that it is difficult to describe in words. Everything rattled, burned, tracer bullets rushed. It seemed like the end of the world had come. It was impossible to raise their heads; they crawled up to their necks in the mud in a plastun way, and from the bushes a choral monotonous was heard: "Rus, surrender, Rus, surrender ..." Before our eyes, those with whom they experienced all the horror of the environment were dying. The living crawled, each hoping to survive, because there are only 18-19 years behind them." Meretskov, the leading specialist in the corridors, did not fail to emphasize his merit: "...everyone moving in the direction of a narrow

280

watering cans, left the encirclement, although the losses from mortar and machine-gun fire were generally large (??). Subtle observation: who did not die, he survived.

Tens of thousands of soldiers and commanders, the headquarters of the agonizing army remained on a patch of swamps measuring 2 by 2 kilometers near Novaya Kerest, being subjected to devastating enemy fire from all sides. Old people, women and children driven from the villages have been here for more than a month. "From the explosions, whole platforms with people took off into the air," recalls L.Ye., a resident of the village of Finev Lug. Borisov. "Many people were killed. The neighbor was wounded all over, his mother's chest was torn off. Once, after the bombing, I see: a wounded woman, both arms are torn off, and she is crawling into the bunker - there are children there. In the morning I looked - and the mother, and two dead boys ... We dangled through the forest, dangled, but never lost our way to Myasny Bor. Tumanov (the former chief of police from Rogavka) walked around everyone and said that there was no way to get through: the Germans had blocked the passage. He ordered me to go home. We returned to Finevka - not a single whole house, all burned down.

In the middle of the day on June 25, the Army Military Council decided to break the remaining units into small groups and leave the encirclement on their own. This was the end of the organized actions of the 2nd shock army. But its remnants, in groups and singly, still tried to break through to their own. From June 20 to June 29, about 7 thousand people came out along the "Meretskov corridors", about half of them were injured, according to Vasilevsky - "a significant part of the army", which just a month ago numbered more than 50 thousand boys. On July, according to the General Staff, 9600 people got out of the units of the 2nd shock army, crawled out of the encirclement. Those who escaped from the Valley of Death were met by doctors and quartermasters, who tried to treat and feed them. Some, because of weakness, could not eat, others pounced on food and died right there. Special departments took care of "strengthening KGB measures" in order to identify agents recruited by the Abwehr.

281

In Malaya Vishera and in Moscow, they were anxiously waiting for the exit of Vlasov and the army headquarters, but almost none of them managed to escape. An army reconnaissance officer A. Rogov broke through the narrow-gauge railway to Myasny Bor. Near the Veretinsky Mokh swamp, the partisans of the Luga detachment discovered the chief of communications of the army, Major General A.A. Afanasyev with four fighters. |

Kositsyn's special detachment was sent for the army commander, who did not come back. The intelligence department of the front threw eight search groups into the German rear. The area where the army died was combed by partisans. The Leningrad headquarters of the partisan movement daily exchanged radiograms with them: |

"It is a great honor to find and help Vlasov. Radio every three hours .. I am giving you an order from the Headquarters of the High Command to deliver Vlasov, Afanasyev, Vinogradov by plane, which will be served at your request ...".

To carry out this task, Stalin ordered "to put all the aviation" of the Volkhov Front!

The enemy also actively searched. Leaflets with a portrait of Vlasov, thus, from the newspaper Pravda, were scattered by the Germans over the villages, promising a large reward for helping to capture the army commander. General Vlasov disappeared...

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On June 28, the day of the start of Operation Blau, the summer offensive of the Wehrmacht on the southern sector of the Eastern Front, Hitler was informed of the victorious end of the Volkhov battle. The report reported on the captured 649 guns, 171 tanks and 32,759 Soviet soldiers taken prisoner. Among them were thousands of wounded, and 793 medical workers out of 831 available, led by the chief medical officer and military doctor | rank K.K. Boborykin. The commander of the 327th Rifle Division, General Antyufeyev, the commander of the 57th Rifle Brigade, Major I. Evstifeev, the correspondent of the newspaper Courage, the senior political instructor Musa Jalil, the author of the Moabit Notebook, who was listed as a traitor to the Motherland, and in 1956 posthumously

282

awarded the Star of the Hero. Goebbels declared victory. On June 29, Shcherbakov indignantly refuted "another fake of Hitler's scribbles", saying that the 2nd shock army retreated to a previously prepared line, the enemy units that had broken through on its communications were "mostly destroyed", the Germans lost only killed at least 30 thousand people, our units - up to 10 thousand killed and about 19 thousand missing. Halder wrote in his diary: "On the front of Army Group North, the Volkhov grouping can be considered as finally liquidated." On June 30, Hitler promoted Georg von Küchler to Feldmarshals. Three days later, Georg Lindemann received the rank of Oberst General.

On July 12, in the village of Tukhovezhi, Oredezhsy District, General Vlasov surrendered to a German patrol under the command of Hauptmann von Schwerdtner. When the commander was only the cook, the instructor of the military department M.I. Voronova is another field wife. The next day, Vlasov was interrogated at Lindemann's headquarters. The German information bureau transmitted a message about the capture of a major Russian general beyond the Volkhov.

The Soviet leadership continued the search until July 17.

In the 20th, over the swamps, where groups of encircled people were hiding, German planes began to scatter leaflets with a photograph of the captured Vlasov and calls to follow his example.

Nothing was yet known about the behavior of the general in captivity, the first leaflet signed by him had not yet been published, and only six months later the famous "Smolensk Appeal" of the Russian Committee would be published, calling on the Russian people to rise up in the struggle against Bolshevism, "Stalin and his cliques" together with the "National Socialist Germany of Adolf Hitler", and already at the end of July, the Red Army soldiers were told in political information that General Vlasov, having received an order from the command, did nothing to fulfill it, and surrendered to captured along with the army.

283

On March 3, 1943, Vlasov's famous open letter "Why I took the path of fighting Bolshevism" was published in the occupation newspapers, which, in particular, said:

"I was appointed Deputy Commander of the Volkhov Front and Commander of the 2nd Shock Army. Perhaps, Stalin's disregard for the life of the Russian people never had such an effect as in the practice of the 2nd shock army. The management of this army was centralized and concentrated in the hands of the General Staff. No one knew about her real position and was not interested in him. One order of command contradicted another. The army was doomed to certain death.

The fighters and the commander for weeks received 100 and even 50 grams of crackers a day. They swelled from hunger, and many could no longer move through the swamps, where the army was led by the direct leadership of the High Command. But everyone continued to fight selflessly.

Russian people died heroes. But for what? What did they sacrifice their lives for? What did they have to die for?

I had to give the "vile traitor" a worthy

time to delve deeper into the problem. In July 1943, the newspaper "For Pobedu" published on behalf of the Main Political Directorate: "... Hitler's ischion Vlasov, on the instructions of the Germans, led units of our Second Shock Army into encirclement, killed many Soviet people, and he himself defected to his masters - the Germans. First, the death of the 2nd shock army was blamed on Vlasov, and then the failure of the entire strategic operation to break the blockade of Leningrad. Scribblers, agitators and murderous generals happily seized on this version and creatively developed it: Vlasov was born into a kulak family, graduated from a theological seminary, crept into the party by deceit, rose to the rank of general on the instructions of German intelligence, gave the enemy the secret plans of the Soviet command, opened the front and "ran to the owners" together with the army, which formed the core of the Vlasov ROA.

This explanation suited everyone: Meretskova, Hozl

284

on, Galanin, Vasilevsky, Voroshilov, the "Korkins" and "Shvagirevs", and most importantly, Comrade Stalin personally. But all the fighters and commanders of the 2nd shock army of the first formation were stigmatized for decades - Mo - "Vlasovite". The myth was cultivated for almost half a century, until the very collapse of the USSR, and was deeply rooted in the mass consciousness. Veterans of the battles for Myasnaya Bor and Spasskaya Polist were embarrassed to admit that they served, but ... we know, we know, in the same "Vlasov army". The Soviet government and the native Politburo committed another meanness towards the citizens who defended them, trampling the dead into the mud and remaining alive, for the sake of maintaining the illusion of their own infallibility. And this betrayal was not committed by Vlasov.

In 1992, a veteran of the 2nd Shock Army of the Civil Aviation. Stetsenko wrote to the military commissar of the Gatchina region: "... are we all, living and dead, to blame for the fact that General Vlasov surrendered to the Germans alive? I was there until the last day and I know that Vlasov did not surrender any army. I also know that none of us, who were captured by the Nazis, went there voluntarily. And what is our fault that they took us to the swamp, perishing from hunger and wounds? It was not traitors who suffered and died in German camps behind barbed wire — they settled better. Hungry, destitute people on beds of bedbugs did not betray anyone. On the outskirts of Vyra, ditches are overgrown with thick grass, where thousands of innocently tortured people are buried. Is it only in Vyra? Av Mezno, Volosovo, Luga? Is it right that on thousands of graves, where the earth swayed for several days (after all, people still alive were thrown there), there are no small plaques reminding us that these people lived on earth? When I write all this, it seems to me that I am writing from the other world. Will anyone hear

The former private of the 22nd separate rifle brigade did not wait for an answer.

Only on January 24, 1995, Russian President B.M. Yeltsin signed a decree that fully rehabilitated former prisoners of war and repatriates. The authorities have forgiven the innocent. Asking for forgiveness is such a habit for her

285

it was not possible. Moreover, in Russia it is always successive when it comes to achievements, and always new, again not answering for anything, that's the charm when it comes to meanness towards one's own or other peoples.

Meretskov, who directly supervised it, devoted one paragraph to the consideration of the results of the Lyuban operation, confining himself to the standard set of arguments of the defeated Soviet generals: the operation "was of great importance" (I wonder what it is?), "our troops thwarted the offensive of the army group" North" (was she going to attack?), "pulled over 15 divisions" (having under her command 48 settlement divisions; how would they be useful near Vyazma or Demyansk) and inflicted "significant losses" on the enemy (a worthy result of the strategic operations).

With much more diligence and enthusiasm, the permanent commander of the Volkhov Front (probably the only case in Stalin's Kalra politics, when the front was commanded by the same person for more than two years from the moment of creation to disbandment. But it was too great to get used to fighting in the swamps) engages in psychoanalysis of Vlasov's personality, looking for and finding in it a congenital pathology - an "embryo" of betrayal: "The question arises: how did it happen that Vlasov turned out to be a traitor? The answer, it seems to me, can only be given one. Vlasov was an unprincipled careerist. His behavior before that could well be considered a disguise behind which hid indifference to his homeland. His membership in the Communist Party is nothing more than a path to high positions. His actions at the front, for example, in 1941 near Kiev and Moscow, are an attempt to distinguish himself in order to demonstrate professional abilities and move forward as soon as possible.

Other "psychoanalysts", not so venerable and of a lower rank, began to refer to the diagnosis made by the marshal — Generals I.S. Katyshkin, K.F. Kalashnikov and

286

others. After all, you can't say it better anyway: Vlasov "demonstrated professional abilities from unprincipled careerism." Meretskov himself and his army commanders did not shine in the Luban operation. The question arises: did they not show professional abilities for fundamental reasons, so that they would not be considered careerists? You don't have to ask about party membership - they all walked along this "path". Marxism freed all of them from the "chimera of conscience" and "so-called morality" back in the days when Adolf Schicklgruber was rotting in the trenches of the Western Front.

Major Kuzin, trying to at least somehow rehabilitate himself in the eyes of the Special Department, tried to give the patron the most negative characterization: "Vlasov is very proud, believed that only he was capable and could work, and he called the rest of the commanders of military formations loafers and parasites ... Vlasov was very generous with state funds for spending on his personal needs and economical on his personal ... Vlasov is very demanding on his subordinates, and sometimes even cruel, this created the appearance that he was disciplined, but all this is a contradiction - his behavior towards superiors above him.

For me, this is a typical portrait of the majority of Soviet generals, nomenklatura party officials, in general, the "leaders" of a country where suffrage came from the age of sixteen, and execution was given from fourteen.

In exactly the same words, colleagues tell about Zhukov, Eremenko, Zakharov, Gordov, Sokolovsky.

As the writer Nikolai Konyaev noted: "The goal was wonderful. To liberate Leningrad, to save many hundreds of thousands of people from starvation... A commander who did this in January 1942 would have become a national hero. But in January forty-second, this commander had to be a folk hero. Alas ... Neither Kirill Afanasyevich Meretskov, nor Mikhail Semenovich Khozin, nor Andrey Andreyevich Vlasov himself was clearly suitable for this

287

role. They were unable to rise above the concerns of their own careers, and as a result, something happened to them that always happens to people who are placed on the crest of events and do not

capable of breaking the tide."

Soviet: encyclopedias, artificially separating the offensive and defensive phases of the Luban operation, call it "not fully completed", they say, the Germans were slightly underencircled and the operation ended there. Meanwhile, the battle for the Volkhov had a very specific "full completion": the defeat of the Soviet troops and the destruction of half of the Volkhov Front. At the same time, our marshals, who, apparently, received machine-gun and cannon wounds in the heads on the battlefields, had the remnants of their minds to be proud of an amazing achievement in military art: "... the Soviet troops seized the initiative and forced the enemy's 18th army to conduct defensive fights!

For comparison, I quote an analysis of the operation made by an ordinary soldier of the 839th artillery regiment: "Why did the Nazi command not go for the direct physical destruction of the army, but pulled, pulled, pulled?

The Germans fought skillfully, smartly, using the miscalculations of our command. And the mediocrity of our highest echelon was obvious: the Headquarters, headed by Stalin, destroyed their own troops without hesitation, as if they did not consist of people, but of insects. "Forward! No step back!" And what will come out of it and at what cost - it does not matter. So it turned out that the Germans exterminated Russian units in the Novgorod forests with small forces of troops and equipment, outnumbering several times. The "Father of All Nations" hoped to win the winter offensive at the expense of frosts and was cruelly mistaken.

But when spring called, and with it mudslides, why didn't they come to their senses then? The swamps opened up - not a single car would pass. There would be to come to their senses and turn the troops back, but where is it! Again they drove forward, to the cherished goal - to Lyubany»

288

Even a simple peysan, who watched the assault on her native village from the cellar, saw the obvious: the illiteracy and thoughtlessness of the Soviet military leaders who killed their soldiers with the callousness of true Bolsheviks: "A lot of people died then. How, for example, did they take Finevka? One party goes on the attack - they will kill. Others will be sent - and those will be laid down. In the "forehead" nothing worked. They took the village and the station only when they took a detour, from the side of Keresti. The Germans finally fled..." Strategically, the incompetent Lyuban operation, absorbing huge military resources, also led to the failure of the Stalin-Zhukov plan to defeat the Army Group Center. This is the opinion of the enemy: "The fact that the German front on the Volkhov attracted very significant forces, of course, significantly facilitated the position of the German central group of troops, which was engaged in heavy fighting and repeatedly broken through. The forces that the Soviet command put into use during its offensive on the Volkhov could have a significant impact on the outcome of the operation of the German Army Group Center. Stalin made the same mistake as Hitler - he wanted to attack everywhere and therefore did not achieve a decisive victory anywhere.

At the beginning of July, the 2nd Shock Army, "out of encirclement," consisting of seven divisions, six brigades and one battalion, had only 10,898 commanders and Red Army men. Thus, 292 men remained from the 327th Rifle Division, 159 from the 59th Separate Rifle Brigade, 99 from the 57th Brigade, and 136 fighters from the 19th Guards Division. The entire 46th Rifle Division fit in the back of a truck, the 92nd Division, which lost its Battle Banner, was disbanded, as well as the 13th Cavalry Corps. The divisional deputy commander, Major General P.F., was killed in the battle. Alferyev, commissar Zuev (according to another version, he shot himself), chief of staff of the army Vinogradov, who never tried on the epaulettes of a major general, division commanders colonels A.N. Popov, F.E. Black,

289

S.I. Bulanov, A.N. Larichev. Not wanting to surrender, the head of the Special Department, A.G., committed suicide. Shashkov, head of the political department I.P. Garus, a number of other commanders and

political workers. Entire units and staffs in full force perished in the "cauldron". Since the establishment of a complete blockade, the army has lost more than 43 thousand people, of which 37.5 thousand are irretrievable.

General Klykov, who fell so successfully ill and was healed in the same timely manner, again took command of the 2nd shock (and, God forbid everyone, lived up to eighty years).

The total losses of the three armies of the Volkhov Front during the "operation to withdraw the 2nd shock army from the encirclement", which ended on July 10, 1942, amounted to almost 95 thousand people - all were attributed to Vlasov. In general, the Luban adventure cost us 403 thousand killed and wounded men. Irrevocably - 150 thousand people. At the same time, the losses of the 54th and 4th armies, all this time fighting for Pogostye, which Tytler ordered to return, and from the Kirishi, which the Fuhrer, who believed that the defense of this village cost too much German blood, proposed to evacuate, were taken into account only until April inclusive - in accordance with the established "chronology".

Chapter 9 UST-TOSNO-SINYAVINSK OPERATION

(July - October 1942)

The situation in Leningrad in the summer of 1942 could be called relatively normal, as far as it was possible for any Soviet front-line city.

The troops of the Army Group "North" had no opportunities for active combat operations in the near future and sat on the defensive. All German strategic reserves and marching reinforcements were transferred to the south to participate in the "main operation", the divisions of the von Kuchler group were replenished "secondarily".

There was a silence on the Karelian Isthmus that irritated our active generals, the opposing sides tried not to disturb each other once again: "Continuing to get acquainted with the artillery units of the front," recalls G.F. Odintsov, — I visited the 23rd Army, which was commanded by Major General A.I. Cherepanov ... I was struck by the silence that reigned in the zone of this army. On the southern wing of our front, artillery was firing around the clock, mortars were fired, machine-gun chatter was heard, but here it was as if there was no war. With the head of the artillery of the army, Colonel I.M. Pyadusov went around our entire front line near Belostrov and did not hear a single shot. "Have you concluded a truce with the enemy, Comrade Pyadusov? - I reproach the charter. "We can't let him live in peace!"

291

The well-thought-out and well-prepared summer navigation, opened on May 25, was a success. The volume of traffic across Lake Ladoga was increased to 7,000 tons of cargo and 10,000 people per day. It was even possible to establish the movement of the railway ferry. In total, during the navigation of 1942, the city received more than 790,000 tons of cargo, half of which was food. Significant reserves were created not only in Leningrad, but also in Kronstadt, Oranienbaum and on the islands of the Gulf of Finland. Almost 300,000 servicemen, 202 tanks, 631 guns arrived to replenish the Leningrad Front and the Baltic Fleet, and 448,000 residents were evacuated. In July, compared with January, the death rate of the population decreased by 5.5 times and amounted to 17,695 people, in August it decreased by another 2 times. The NKVD department stopped recording sudden deaths on the streets.

The problem of hunger was removed. Leningrad residents began to receive rationed products on an equal footing with residents of other cities in the country. Soldiers on the front line received 800 grams of bread, hot welding for breakfast and lunch.

Along the bottom of Ladoga, between the eastern and western shores

mi Shlisselburg Bay, a pipeline was laid, through which the city received 300-400 tons of fuel daily. He entered service on June 18 and was practically invulnerable to the enemy. The laying of an underwater electric cable from the Volkhovskaya hydroelectric power station was of great importance for improving the communications of Leningrad. From the beginning of June, Leningraders were again mobilized for defensive work. City enterprises produced machine guns, heavy and light machine guns, cannons, tanks, shells, mines - about 100 types of military products in total.

Perked up, party leaders came up with a new initiative - to turn the entire remaining population of the city into soldiers, men, women and schoolchildren, without interrupting production. On August 12, the Leningrad City Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks adopted a resolution on the total military training of the townsfolk. Pravda correspondent Pavel Luknitsky writes:

292

"I got acquainted with the exemplary program of this military training. It deals with the conditions for fighting the enemy in the city and the methods of conducting defensive battles in the city. It talks about how to use the conditions of camouflage for a sudden fire attack and hitting the enemy with a grenade and a bayonet, about bottles filled with a combustible mixture, about how to take cover behind walls, in sewer wells, in the lower floors and basements of houses, and sometimes with grenades to kill the enemy ... It is recommended to turn every house into a bastion, reinforcing it with anything; dig up the streets, build barricades, use high-voltage electric wires, have any heavy objects at hand - crowbars, irons, mortars, weights and stones... How and where to locate observation points? How to help a neighbor in the house, in the yard, in the apartment and in the room? How to prepare windows for sniper fire, grenade throwing and for protection from bullets and shrapnel? Everyone learned how to fight saboteurs, conduct sniper fire with heavy objects, "destroy the enemy with short counterattacks" and "lure tanks into traps": architects, engineers, students, car drivers, telephone operators, nurses and ballerinas.

But Leningrad still remained in the blockade, and with it the troops of the 42nd, 55th, 23rd armies, the Primorsky and Neva operational groups, which were constantly replenished. Units of the 79th fortified region arrived from the Arkhangelsk Military District and took up defensive positions in the zone of the 42nd Army; in the Kolpino area, behind the 55th Army, the newly formed 14th fortified area dug in. The armored forces of the front in July had four brigades: 1, 61, 152 and 220, two heavy breakthrough tank regiments - 31 and 41, equipped with British vehicles, and three separate tank battalions - 86, 118 and 287 th. In addition, there were front-line training units: the 12th tank regiment and training courses for tank commanders. There were over 420 tanks in combat strength and about 40 in training units. The number of guns and mortars, compared with September 1941, doubled. The air forces of the front and the Red Banner Baltic Fleet in mid-July had 340 aircraft.

293

As of August 1, the Volkhov Front included 33 rifle divisions, 11 rifle divisions, 1 airborne division, 7 tank brigades, 1 fortified area, 4 separate tank battalions, 28 separate artillery regiments, and 6 rocket mortar regiments. 14th Air Army under the command of Major General I.P. Zhuravlev, created on the basis of the front-line Air Force, had 116 combat aircraft. Army Group North had 45 divisions, including Z-tank divisions and 4 motorized divisions. In connection with the shortage of manpower that began to affect the Reich, all the infantry divisions of the group were reduced by one third compared to their regular strength: instead of nine, they now had six infantry battalions.

The new operation began to be planned almost immediately. "As soon as the exit from the encirclement of separate groups of fighters and commanders, unable to break through at Myasnoy Bor, was completed," recalls the chief engineer of the front, Colonel-General A.F. Khrenov, "and the Stavka was already in a hurry with the preparation of a new offensive operation." He confirms that they didn't think about defense for a day, they didn't know how to organize it and didn't intend to: "To begin with,

in most areas there was only one line of defense, consisting of two trenches (or, rather, from what these trenches replaced). And all the previous experience convinced me that only a defense that has at least two frontiers - the advanced and the main one - can be truly stable. But even those frontiers that were available were not distinguished, in my opinion, by sufficient reliability. The basis of such reliability is a system linking all positions by fire interaction. But I saw everywhere separate, each in itself, artillery, machine-gun and mortar positions. Such a construction of defense turned out to be untenable in the face of the force of fire and the suddenness of the maneuver of the Nazis. The proximity of the enemy forward edge threatened that each single firing point, without the support of the others, could be easily blocked and destroyed.

But this problem did not bother anyone, we did not

294

they were afraid, there was no time to deal with such "nonsense". Even without that, the Soviet troops did not sit idle for a single day, since our generals had a firm conviction that "defense discourages" the soldier. To prevent this from happening, and also with the aim of "bleeding the enemy", achieving "dispersion of his grouping", creating "favorable conditions", the troops of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts were active in all directions.

Thus, the 42nd Army of General Nikolaev from July 20 to August 26 and the 55th Army of General Sviridov from July 23 to August 4 attacked the enemy in several sectors in the Uritsk and Kolpino regions. At the cost of heavy losses, units of the 268th Infantry Division, with the support of the 220th Tank Brigade, managed to liberate Putrolovo and Yam-Izhora. The 4th army of General Gusev, with the forces of the 311th, 80th, 44th, 310th rifle divisions, the 186th and 195th tank brigades, was advancing on Kiripgi throughout July and August, held by the shift-changing battalions of the 11th and 21st infantry. In just one day on July 11, 9550 mini shells were fired at the bridgehead, on July 29 2900 shells were used. The village itself no longer existed, the impregnable position of the enemy remained a hill with a grove "Vysokaya", dominating the area and blocking the view of the German crossings across the Volkhov, the ruins of a chemical plant, turned into a center of all-round defense. Kirishi became one of the bloodiest places on the Volkhov front; after several days of fighting, only a few active bayonets remained in the battalions. The Nrussacs also suffered heavy losses, calling the bridgehead the "second Verdun". Scrap iron, bordering the line of German positions, piled up 170 burnt, in the soldier's jargon "red", Soviet tanks. The Germans led communication passages to them and arranged machine-gun nests under the bottom.

No one has been particularly successful. If we are to believe those who explained the meaning of these actions after the war, our commanders saw the benefit in the fact that they "kept the Nazis in constant tension", checked

295

offensive capabilities of their troops and "as if they were rehearsing the breaking of the blockade".

Following the results of the Uritsa operation, Govorov, the most competent general, the first of the commanders of the Leningrad Front to attend to the real combat training of the troops, issued a devastating order:

"During the operation on Uritsk 29. 7.42, the command, headquarters and troops of the 42nd Army again repeated a number of major mistakes in the preparation of the battle, the political support of the battle, the control of the battle and the organization of the interaction of the combat arms, which, taken together, led to the failure to fulfill parts of a combat mission.

The Military Council of the Army did not take measures to check the combat control system of the 85th Infantry Division, did not take the necessary measures to eliminate on the spot the errors in control revealed during the battle, did not show the necessary exactingness, and did practically nothing to ensure that the division tasks. The military council allowed during the entire battle to introduce

deluded himself, not only did not take measures to expose the false reports, but did not even catch the obvious
plausibility and contradictions in the reports of the performers.

Not knowing the situation, the Military Council of the Army took the path of presenting false, unverified reports to the Military Council of the Front on the successful completion of the assigned combat mission by the 85th Rifle Division, at a time when the division had not even begun to fulfill it.

The command of the 85th Rifle Division, 59th and 109th Rifle Regiments showed cowardice, controlling the battle from dugouts and not having observation posts; in which the field of activity of their troops could be seen. There were no commanders and political workers in the division who would have been able to reveal in time the non-compliance with the combat order and by personal example on the battlefield to captivate units and subunits to complete the task.

I ORDER:

Reprimand the Military Council of the 42nd Army - Lieutenant General Nikolaev and Brigadier Commissar Panyushkin for the second time mistakes made in the leadership of the operation, in

296

as a result of which the troops did not fulfill their tasks.

Persons of the command and political staff of the 85th Rifle Division, who were the main culprits for the failure to fulfill the combat mission, should be removed from their positions, deprived or demoted in military ranks, deprived of orders and medals and sent to the front-line penal battalion.

The junior officers and rank and file, who showed cowardice on the battlefield, should be withdrawn from the units and sent to the army penal company.

At the same time, preparations were underway for a new operation to break the blockade, in which the forces of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts were to take part in cooperation with the Baltic Fleet. The salient to the south of Lake Ladoga, which separated the Soviet fronts, was chosen as the area of combat operations. The general idea was to defeat the Mginsko-Sinyavinskaya grouping of the enemy with counter strikes over the shortest distance and lift the blockade of Leningrad.

On this path, the Soviet troops had to overcome a well-prepared and heavily fortified defense with a large number of natural and artificial obstacles. In eleven months the Germans made great efforts to make the salient impregnable. Along all natural frontiers, along rivers and lakes, ravines and swamps, along the heights and in the workers' settlements, the Germans created defensive positions with many nodes of resistance and strong points with artillery and mortar batteries. The personnel of the garrisons were housed in strong dugouts, were provided with reliable communications, the front line was covered with minefields and several rows of barbed wire.

It was impossible to dig trenches in the swampy ground, and the Germans, who were constantly thinking not only about conquering new territories, but also about keeping what they had already captured, built fences. Two rows of stakes were driven into the ground,

297

twisted with wire. The stakes were braided with branches and branches of trees, and the space between them was filled with logs and wet earth. The result was a wall 2-2.5 meters high and of the same thickness. The land was taken from the side of the enemy, thereby creating a deep ditch filled with swamp water in front of the fortification. There were bunkers and loopholes for shooting in the fence. As the experience of hostilities showed, it turned out to be extremely difficult to overcome such an obstacle.

Usually, sappers crawled up to the fence, placed a powerful charge under it, and with an explosion made a passage into which the infantry rushed. Sometimes a breach was punched by artillery advanced for direct fire. Breaking the fence has always required great effort and cost a lot of blood. In addition, as a rule, one more fence, disguised firing points and cut-off positions were found behind it. But in the summer of 1942, Soviet military engineers were skeptical about such a "medieval", moreover, very laborious, fortification "design". In addition, the area itself here, according to Meretskov's definition, was "extremely unsuitable" for offensive operations. Extensive peat extraction stretches from the coast of Ladoga to Sinyavino, and to the south, 1.5–2 kilometers away, there are solid impenetrable forests with swampy areas and swamps. Almost the only dry place was the limestone Sinyavino Heights, which towered 10-15 meters above the flat plain surrounding them. Here was the key position of the enemy with all-round defense, visibility and shelling for several kilometers. All passable areas were kept under the fire of bunkers, artillery firing points and were heavily mined. Better conditions for a side forced to defend itself with small forces are hard to imagine. Manstein did not fail to note: "... we would never have organized a breakthrough in such terrain." To which Meretskov, having understood topography only by 1944, shrugged his hands: "Of course, peat bogs north of Sinyavino and solid forests south of it represented large

298

difficulties, especially when using heavy weapons and powerful equipment. But where can you find a place better than this?"

In fact, the idea of a sudden blow to overcome some 16 kilometers separating the two Soviet fronts looked very tempting. Our commander assumed "with luck" to reach the Neva within two or three days. The calculation was also made on tactical and operational surprise, on the fact that the Germans, fighting "according to the rules", such "nonsense" from the enemy expect.

Fulfilling the instructions of the Headquarters, the commander of the Leningrad Front, General Govorov, decided to deliver two strikes by the forces of the 55th Army and the Neva Operational Group: one in the direction of Tosno, the other in the direction of Sinyavino in order to connect with the troops of the Volkhov Front. The rest of the formations of the front were to carry out active offensive operations in the Uritsky and Staro-Panov directions, not allowing the Germans to maneuver forces. The ships of the Baltic Fleet were to land troops on the opposite bank of the Neva and Tosno, seize bridges and crossings, and ensure that the Lenfront's strike groups force the water lines and develop the offensive. The air forces of the front numbered 185 serviceable aircraft, the Baltic Fleet - 187.

The decision of the commander of the Volkhov Front was to break through the enemy defenses on the 15-kilometer section between Gontovaya Lipka and Voronovo by ramming a blow of large infantry masses, bypassing Sinyavino from the south, go to the Neva in the Otradnoye area, unite with the Leningrad Front and together with him to defeat the Mgin'sk grouping of the enemy. In the area of the upcoming breakthrough, a 150,000th fist was assembled from the formations of the 8th army of General Starikov (128, 265, 11, 286, 327th rifle, 3, 19, 24th guards divisions, 1st separate mountain rifle, 16th tank brigade, 107, 500, 502, 503, 507th tank battalions), 4th Guards Rifle Corps (259th rifle division, 22, 23, 32, 33, 57, 137, 140th rifle brigades) and the 2nd shock army of General Klykov (19th and 374th rifle divisions

299

zii), built in three echelons. The essence of the idea was to break through to the Neva at a high pace before German reinforcements arrived from other sectors. The support of the first echelon was to be carried out by a powerful artillery group, consisting of 12 artillery and 9 mortar regiments, 4 separate mortar battalions, 3 guards

mortar regiments M-13 and 7 guards mortar divisions M-30. Taking into account the given funds, the 8th Army had 1657 guns and mortars and about 150 tanks.

In the Volkhov area, the front commander concentrated a strong reserve consisting of five rifle divisions and one rifle brigade. In the forest near the Voybokalo station, an auxiliary command post was equipped, where Meretskov's headquarters moved. In total, 14 rifle divisions, 7 rifle and 6 tank brigades, 7 separate tank battalions were assigned to break through to Leningrad. The plan also provided for the delivery of auxiliary strikes in the zones of action of the remaining armies - 354, 4, 59 and 52nd. The 18th army of General Lindemann in mid-August included 25 divisions, including one tank, one mountain rifle and three security divisions, the 2nd SS infantry brigade and the SS legion "Norway". The defense of the entire perimeter of the Shlisselburg ledge was carried out by the 26th Army Corps, consisting of the 227th and 223rd Infantry Divisions and two security regiments; from the middle reaches of the Neva to Uritsk, Leningrad was surrounded by the 50th army corps as part of the SS police division, the 121st and 215th infantry divisions and the SS brigade; The Oranienbaum bridgehead was blocked by units of the 58th and 225th divisions. Around Pogostya and near Kirishi, the 28th Corps - 96th, 217th, 93rd, 11th, 21st and 269th Infantry Divisions. From the Gruzino bridgehead to Novgorod, parallel to the highway, the 1st and 38th army corps held the defense, they included the 61st, 1st, 291st, 254th, 212th infantry divisions. The 12th tank and 5th mountain rifle divisions were in reserve. The Spaniards from Novgorod relocated to the Tosno region.

300

At the beginning of August, the offensive plan was approved by the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command. The front received a large number of marching companies, tanks, artillery of large and special power, rocket launchers, shells and material and technical means, including 20,000 machine guns on the personal instructions of Stalin. Within a month, the number of aircraft in the 14th Air Army was increased to 330 aircraft.

To create a strike force in the direction of the main strike, the headquarters of the Volkhov Front had to regroup 13 rifle divisions and 6 tank brigades, more than 20 artillery regiments, a significant number of special units and subunits — in the conditions of an extremely limited road network in a traditionally short time. In order to ensure the secrecy of the transfer of forces to the right wing of the front, a number of masking and misinforming measures were taken. For example, part of the troops, under the pretext of being sent to Stalingrad, was transported in trains from Malaya Vishera to Tikhvin by a circuitous route through Moscow, Vologda and Cherepovets. At the same time, preparations for a major operation in the Novgorod region were simulated. All orders were given verbally and only in person to members of the military councils of the armies and commanders of the corps, who were summoned directly to the front headquarters for this. Meretskov "classified" everything so much that even many years later, describing the course of the preparations for the Sinyavin operation carried out under his direct supervision, he managed not to say a word about the forces at his disposal and about the enemy opposing him, but analyzing the course of the battle, did not remember any of his divisions! What are the memoirs of the commander worth, in which there is not a single specific figure, except for the German losses sucked from the finger, and no conclusions, except for the thoughtful: "What happened, it happened"? A weighty reason in favor of the speedy conduct of an offensive operation, Soviet historians call the need for a pre-emptive strike with the aim of disrupting the new

301

assault on Leningrad. The poor fellows are completely confused, and it is no longer entirely clear: what did they really want in the Soviet Headquarters - "break through the blockade" or "break the assault"? The idea was immediately picked up by Marshal Meretskov, who again lost the battle: "The difficult Luban operation has just ended, which pulled part of the Nazi troops from Leningrad. The soldiers are tired. However, it was impossible to delay, since the Nazi command was preparing for a decisive assault. In general, whatever it is, whatever, you still need to hurry.

Indeed, the Fuhrer of the German nation, making sure

that it was not possible to starve the Leningraders out with hunger and terror, he was inclined to believe that the work begun in September 1941 must be completed and "the remaining ten kilometers must be covered". However, he decided to postpone it for the sake of capturing Baku oil, establishing ties with Turkey and breaking through to the Middle East. Like previous pretenders to world domination - Alexander the Great or Napoleon - Hitler was a romantic and also dreamed of India. The summer campaign for the Wehrmacht was extremely successful. In less than a month, German troops defeated the Bryansk, Southwestern and Southern fronts, advanced 400 kilometers in the main directions, captured the Donbass, Rostov, Sevastopol, launched an offensive in the large bend of the Don towards Stalingrad. In the battles in the south, the Red Army lost 570 thousand soldiers and commanders, 2436 tanks, almost 14 thousand guns and mortars.

Things were going so well that Hitler, with his own hands, began to break the plan of Operation Blue, which had been thought out to the smallest detail. Imagining that the Russians had brought the last reserves into battle and were no longer capable of providing serious resistance, the Fuhrer decided to speed up the events and instead of the envisaged successive operations - to capture first Stalingrad, then the Caucasus - he ordered two offensives to be carried out simultaneously.

302

in divergent directions. Released after the capture of the Crimea, the 11th army of Manstein (who received the rank of field marshal for Sevastopol), which, according to the original plan, was supposed to be transferred across the Kerch Strait to the Taman Peninsula, it was decided to use it near Leningrad.

On July 19, the General Staff of the Ground Forces informed the command of Army Group North that "at present there are considerations ... instead of an offensive on the front of the Kronstadt Bay, launch an offensive against Leningrad with the task of capturing the city, establishing contact with the Finns to the north Leningrad and thereby turn off the Baltic Fleet. The final decision of the Supreme Smooth Commander of the Armed Forces, Adolf Hitler, was formalized by Directive No. 45 of July 23, 1942: "To prepare for the capture of Leningrad by the beginning of September, Army Group North. The operation is codenamed Feuerzauber (later Nordlicht). To do this, transfer to the army group five divisions of the 11th army, along with heavy artillery and artillery of special power, as well as other necessary parts of the reserve of the main

command."

So it turned out that on August 12, Manstein, who returned to the Crimea from vacation, found out that all the schedules developed by his headquarters for crossing the Kerch Strait could be thrown into the trash. By the way, since mid-July, the troops of the 11th German Army "rested from the hardships they endured" and received awards.

On August 23, a meeting was held at the Fuhrer's Headquarters in Vinnitsa dedicated to the preparations for the attack on Leningrad, to which Field Marshal Kuchler, Commander of Army Group North, was summoned. Hitler confirmed the task: to establish contact with the Finns, take possession of the city and raze it to the ground. The organization of the actual assault was entrusted to Field Marshal Manstein and the headquarters of the 11th Army. Together with them, veterans of the Crimean campaign were to be transferred to the north - the 24th, 132nd, 170th infantry, 28th jaeger divisions and siege artillery. 12 divisions passed into submission to the headquarters of the 11th Army,

303

including the 12th Panzer and SS brigade, located front to the north; Headquarters of the 18th Army - formations in the Volkhov sector. The 502nd tank battalion of the latest heavy vehicles T-U "Tiger" was sent to Leningrad to pass tests in combat conditions. The Germans also made a request through their representative at the Finnish Headquarters regarding the participation of the Finns in the "joint venture" and their transition to active operations on the Karelian Isthmus. The answer was that "Finland's participation in the attack on the city is excluded."

From the direct assault on Leningrad, Manstein immediately refused. A system of fortifications in depth was erected around the city. The army defense consisted of two lanes with intermediate lines and cut-off positions. Directly behind them, an intra-city defense system (VOG) was created, consisting of an outer strip and six city sectors. The outer strip of the VOG was divided into four regions: southern, western, eastern and northern, equipped with field-type fortifications. The urban sectors were a system of strongholds and included buildings and factory territories prepared for all-round defense. During the summer and autumn of 1942, Leningraders equipped more than 8100 machine-gun and artillery firing points, built 17 km of barricades, 25 km of anti-tank ditches and 52 km of communications. 175 small-caliber artillery guns were transferred from ships to strengthen the defense of the city, and 14 anti-aircraft divisions were involved in firing at ground targets within the city limits. As a result, the territory of Leningrad and the suburbs were turned, in essence, into a continuous fortified area. The VOG included about 10.5 thousand soldiers of military units, almost 3 thousand people from the NKVD troops, more than 2.2 thousand sailors. At the first signal, another 4,000 police officers and up to 10,000 volunteers from the work detachments were to take their positions.

"On the basis of observations, it became clear to us," writes Manstein, "that our army under no circumstances

304

should be involved in combat operations within the city of Leningrad, where our forces would quickly melt away. Hitler's point of view that the city could be forced to surrender by terrorist raids, we were as little inclined to share as the experienced commander of this corps, Colonel-General von Richthofen.

Therefore, the field marshal's plan was to break through the enemy's defenses south of Leningrad and advance to the very outskirts of the city after powerful artillery and air bombardments with the forces of three corps. After that, the two corps were to turn to the right, cross the Neva on the move, bypass Leningrad from the east, depriving it of any connection with the mainland, and defeat the Soviet troops between the river and Ladoga.

The offensive was scheduled for 14 September.

And here is the paradox: Meretskov, having barely managed to inform the reader that "it was impossible to delay ...", literally on the next page he is dumbfounded by the message: "K. Unfortunately, at that time, none of us knew that the German command was preparing in those same days an operation for the final capture of Leningrad ... However, the enemy, in turn, knew nothing about the preparation of our offensive. It must be admitted that both sides were able to carry out the preparation of operations covertly, with extensive camouflage measures and skillful misinformation. The result of the scientific work of the four institutes that wrote the history of the Second World War was such a clumsy one: the Soviet Headquarters decided to preempt the enemy's offensive, without having the slightest idea about him.

In order to divert the attention of the enemy and tie down his forces along the entire length of the front line, they were the first to move on to active operations of the army in other directions. So in early August, the divisions of the 59th Army (2, 65, 191, 372, 374, 376, 377, 378, 382) with the support of two tank brigades, three regiments of the RGK and a regiment of guards mortars moved

305

On the offensive from the bridgehead on the western bank of the Volkhov, they captured the Dymno stronghold, but soon got stuck near the village of Zvanki. And later, for almost a year and a half, the army of General Korovnikov "fettered and diverted significant enemy forces" - usually three infantry divisions. .

On August 15-17, the troops of the 55th Army of the Leningrad Front launched a series of unsuccessful attacks in the valley of the Bolshaya Izhorka River in the direction of the Oktyabrskaya Railway,

At the same time, preparations for the operation on the left flank of the army were being completed. The idea was to use the forces of the 268th Infantry Division of Colonel S.I. Donskoy, with the support of artillery and fleet aviation, strike at the enemy defending on the western bank of the Tosna, force the river and capture the village of Ivanovskoye on the opposite bank. The successful implementation of this plan created favorable conditions for the development of a further offensive on Mga and Sinyavino. At the mouth of the Tosna, it was planned to land a tactical assault force, which was to seize and hold the railroad and highway bridges with a surprise attack until the tanks and infantry approached. To participate in the battle for the landing, special groups of naval artillery and aviation were created, as well as a landing detachment under the command of Captain 2nd Rank A.M. Bogdanovich, which included up to 38 different boats. 280 fighters from the 942nd Infantry Regiment of the Donskoy Division and 50 sailors from the Leningrad Naval Base were allocated to the landing force. The ticket was issued to them only in one direction, since in case of failure of the 268th Infantry Division, the plan did not provide for a return landing on the boats. Commander of the Baltic Fleet, Admiral V.F. Tributs decided to personally lead the "sea operation" from the command and observation post, equipped on the banks of the Neva: "From here came my orders to the commanders of artillery and aviation to increase the impact on the enemy."

55th Army of General Sviridov at the turn of Yam-Izhora

306

before Ust-Tosno, the SS police division under the command of Major General Wünnenberg with headquarters in the village of Nikolskoye opposed. The reserve of the division consisted of a sapper battalion and two infantry companies. In the area of the upcoming operation, the 2nd battalion of the 1st SS regiment was defending.

On August 19, at 11:00, dozens of Soviet guns hit the German positions. At the same time, long-range batteries and cannons of the ships of the Baltic Fleet paralyzed enemy artillery in Krasny Bor and Otradnoe. A destroyer, gunboats and armored boats fired directly from the Neva. Land and sea pilots delivered a powerful bombing strike. After a 70-minute artillery preparation, following the fire shaft from the Lenspirtstroy plant, the infantry, supported by heavy tanks, rushed to the attack.

At 12 o'clock, a detachment of boats left the village of Kormchino and, under the cover of a smoke screen, unexpectedly for the Germans, landed troops on the eastern coast of Tosna. The paratroopers, having overcome 1200 meters with a jerk, saddled both roads leading to the bridges, and began to move towards Ivanovsky. The sappers following with submachine gunners immediately cleared the highway bridge, which the Germans did not have time to blow up.

The regiments of the 268th division captured Ust-Tosno and part of the forces crossed over the bridge to the east coast. By 15 o'clock Ivanovskoye was occupied, and the advanced Soviet units reached the Pella station. However, the offensive did not develop. The enemy, having come to his senses, continuously counterattacked, throwing into battle all the reserves, up to the rear services. The Russians were building up their forces, landing two more waves of troops. But they could not capture the railway bridge and move further east. On the very first day, the traditional shortcomings in the organization of the operation showed up: the army and navy were each conducting their own party separately. There was no interaction, because there was no plan of joint actions in nature. After the landing, due to the lack of communication, the artillery of the support group was unable to provide him with real assistance in the battles for expanding the bridgehead. The fighters rushed forward, but did not know how to gain a foothold in the recaptured territory,

307

leaving in the rear and on the flanks of German machine gunners and unsuppressed firing points.

"The offensive is going on with varying success," the translator of the 947th Infantry Regiment, I.M. Dunaevskaya. - Huge losses. And what could be expected when the reinforcements arrived just before the operation itself and were thrown into battle almost immediately: they did not participate in the exercises, the commanders did not know the fighters, the fighters did not know the commanders and barely knew each other! And yet our pressure is great: the Germans are cowardly, in places they take them with a bang, but shelling from the right flank, from the railway bridge, from the front and rear, from Krasny Bor, dominating the area, nullifies our advance. Meanwhile, the regimental commissar senior battalion commissar Ryazanov "is engaged in personal prevention", that is, he is looking for the guilty in advance, preparing for the upcoming debriefing."

The Germans firmly stood up on the defensive on both banks of the river south of the Shlisselburg tract and smashed the highway bridge with artillery and mortar fire, making it impossible to pass to the eastern bank, and with the approach of the battalion of the 151st Infantry Regiment of the 61st Division, they again occupied their trenches. in Ust-Tosno, restoring the former front line. The Soviet grouping that broke through in Ivanovo was the paratroopers of Senior Lieutenant A.E. Kostrubo and the 952nd regiment of Major Al. Klyukanov - was cut off from the main forces. During the day, the Donskoy division lost half of its personnel, in the 947th rifle regiment, thrown back to their original positions, 70% dropped out. Another "patch" was formed - Ivanovsky, which had 600 m along the bank of the Neva to the mouth of the Tosna and 400 m to the railway, and another "Valley of Death" - a strip of land between the "be thin" and the railway embankment.

From the western coast, they tried to deliver food and ammunition to the bridgehead, but rare boats reached their goal. The number of defenders quickly dwindled. K. the enemy received reinforcements from the 25th regiment of the 12th Panzer Division, led by Colonel Bayer, with the task of returning Yves

308

new. The Germans also admitted that the losses of their two battalions in two days of fierce fighting "were great": 33 killed, 3 missing and 205 wounded. On August 21, the Bayer battle group launched an offensive from the west and recaptured Ivanovskoye in the middle of the day.

The commander of the 55th Army decided on August 23 to bring into battle the 136th Rifle Division of Colonel N.P. Simonyak, formed on the basis of the 8th Gangut brigade. It was given the task of supporting the offensive of the 268th division, clearing the ravines on the western bank of the enemy, and seizing the railway bridge. The task remained unfulfilled. The 342nd regiment of the division crossed to the eastern bank of the river upstream along the bridge built by sappers, the battalion of the 270th regiment was transferred to the bridgehead by "sea hunters" with heavy losses. But even here it was not possible to achieve success in the eastern direction.

The former company commander of the 342nd regiment recalls the attack of the 2nd battalion: "Very few shells were allocated for artillery preparation. It only lasted five or ten minutes. There was little sense from her, rather even harm, since the shooting from our side attracted the attention of the enemy. We walked at full height, pouring along the embankment ... advanced six hundred meters - the Germans began to fire. We tried crawling, but there were minefields and barbed wire ahead. Two or three of our planes flew by. They didn't do anything special, but caused the German aviation to appear with their appearance. We had practically no protection against it. To be honest, we have already lost 70% of our squad. None of the platoon commanders remained, only two company commanders. By evening, out of 460 people in the battalion, there were left: middle commanders - 8, juniors - 9, privates - 23.

We advanced no more than 2 km from Tosna. Five or six SS counterattacks were repulsed a day ... The 269th and 270th regiments were brought into battle. Before dawn they advanced a kilometer further than us. It seems to me that the operation failed because they attacked not at once with the whole division, but with separate regiments, and there was clearly not enough artillery.

309

On the German side, the offensive of the Soviet regiment was held back by the infantry company of the 636th security battalion, reinforced with machine guns, supported by tankers of the 25th regiment and artillery. The Germans also had a hard time, however, their "terrible losses" in us can cause hysteria. F. Huzeman, a veteran of the police division, writes: "August 23 at 11.50 — a new Russian attack with up to two regiments on the Gieseke sector (western bank of Tosna), which ended in the complete annihilation of the enemy. At 14.15 the Russians manage to break through in the same area. At 17.00 they launched an attack on the 1st regiment west of the mouth of Tosna, but were repulsed. At 2300, the Russians attacked again, they managed to break through, which was blocked at 2350. Attack - breakthrough - counter-attack followed each other all Sunday 23 August. The dead were uncountable. Special teams buried about 100 people. There were 212 wounded at the dressing station."

Two Soviet divisions lost more than 5,000 soldiers during the period from 19 to 25 August, the 952nd Rifle Regiment withdrew to the west coast along the floating bridge - thirty survivors "Klukanovites". The following days were only a repetition of the days of the past, the overall picture battles remained unchanged. Until the end of August, formations of the Leningrad Front tried to build on their success on the Mga, attacking along the Kirov railway, but they could not do this. On September 2, the 43rd and 85th rifle divisions were brought into action - with the same result. Due to the mutual depletion of human resources, the fighting on Tosna subsided, besides, in view of the offensive of the Volkhov Front, the Germans had to withdraw the 151st Infantry Regiment and units of the 12th Panzer Division. (By the way, about "resources": a German source notes the participation of 15-16-year-old boys in the battles on the Soviet side, which is confirmed by the journals of irretrievable losses of the 55th Army.)

General Govorov was once again convinced that "many commanders and staffs forgot the elementary principles of command and control of troops and their organization, lost sight of

310

that forgetting these fundamentals can frustrate and ruin any operation," no matter how well it was conceived: "They embark on the path of harmful simplification, mechanically transferring the methods of controlling simpler forms of combat into a complex combat environment. They neglect the knowledge of the situation, without which any control of the battle is unthinkable. Not knowing the actual situation and, consequently, the position of their troops and those of the enemy, they deprive themselves of the opportunity to organize the subsequent stages of the battle, thereby letting things go to ruinous chance. All this inevitably leads to the fact that the attack of uncontrolled units during the battle is broken up into uncoordinated actions of individual units, the offensive loses its purposefulness, the system of interaction of types of weapons is violated, the enemy, as a result of this, gets the initiative in his hands, and our units, suffering heavy losses due to disorganization, do not fulfill their combat mission, despite their superiority in forces. The headquarters of the army divisions, having lost contact with the troops, thereby lose their influence on the course and outcome of the battle, turning from headquarters into places of residence of commanders isolated from their troops and, consequently, depriving themselves of the opportunity to command.

By September 10, the front had stabilized. Ust-Tosno and a small foothold in Ivanovskoye remained in our hands. The "bloody losses" of the army of General Sviridov on the entire front of the SS police division, the Germans, according to data received from prisoners and defectors, were estimated at 21 thousand people.

In an order on the results of the Ust-Tosnensk operation, the commander of the Leningrad Front gave a hopelessly accurate assessment of the actions of the 55th Army, which in a broad sense is applicable to the entire Red Army:

"For this operation, 5 rifle divisions, a tank brigade, a separate tank battalion, significant artillery and mortar reinforcements, and the Front Air Force were assigned. Despite the superiority over the enemy, the task set by the army was not completed.

The main reasons for not completing tasks are:

311

The complete carelessness and illiteracy of the Military Council and the army headquarters, commanders and headquarters of divisions in organizing and conducting tactical reconnaissance of the enemy, as a result of which, neither before the battle, nor during the battle, neither the army commander nor the division commanders knew the enemy.

The army commander and division commanders do not know how to direct artillery and reinforcement mortars and tanks in modern offensive combat. Artillery and mortar fire was not massed in decisive directions. Tactical missions of artillery and mortar reinforcements were not purposefully set according to the stages of the battle. Artillery objects are not indicated at all, their choice is left to artillery commanders independently. Mortar fire, despite repeated instructions, was not massively used.

As a result of the ill-conceived use of artillery and mortars, the enemy's fire system at the forefront, his mortar and artillery batteries were not suppressed.

The introduction of tank units into battle was not ensured by a number of organizational measures. Minefields have not been

"mined, as a result of which, with the introduction into battle, the tanks suffered losses in their minefields. The roads were not prepared. The commander of the 268th Rifle Division was an attempt to solve problems by fighting only tank units, without linking their actions with the infantry and without providing artillery support.

The headquarters of the armies and divisions turned out to be unprepared for command and control. The chiefs of staffs of armies and divisions did not supervise the activities of subordinate departments and chiefs of military branches, did not set specific tasks for them either in the organization of the battle or during it.

Clarification of the situation, position and actions of their troops took place with such a delay that individual private successes of the troops were not used and developed in a timely manner. There was no control over the execution of the given orders. The chiefs of staff were engaged only in fixing events, not controlling the actual position of the troops and the veracity of incoming reports ...

312

In the operation, the army troops suffered heavy losses in personnel killed and wounded. The number of losses speaks for the fact that the commanding staff of the army has dulled the consciousness of the need to preserve the personnel of the army as much as possible. Disregard for the unjustified losses of soldiers and commanders is a characteristic feature of the command of the 55th Army. Even when there is no active hostilities, the 55th Army suffers the highest losses among the armies and front groups. Suffice it to point out that in the period from September 6 to September 9, the army lost 3,800 people killed and wounded ...

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Naturally, the army commanders did not like the very smart commander, calling him among themselves the "pharmacist".

No matter how hard the headquarters of the Volkhov Front tried to disguise its intentions, it was impossible to completely hide such large-scale preparations and movements of troops from German intelligence. Her reports were carefully recorded by General Halder:

August 25: "On the Volkhov, the enemy moves forward his command posts."

August 26: "Signs of a close Russian offensive south of Lake Ladoga are multiplying."

On August 27, at 6 o'clock in the morning, Meretskov began to cut the Shlisselburg ledge. After a two-hour artillery preparation, culminating in a powerful 10-minute raid by rocket-propelled mortars, they fired, however, in the usual way, at the areas, including guns of special power - along the entire line, from Ladoga to Voronovo, went on the offensive eight divisions of the 8th Army.

The main blow from Gaitolovo was dealt by the 6th Guards Rifle Corps, staffed mainly by cadets of infantry schools (this is also our know-how - to form rifle companies from five minutes to five officers). The first two days the offensive developed quite successfully. Having crossed the Black River, breached the front line of defense and wedged at the junction of the enemy's 227th and 223rd infantry divisions to a depth of 1-2.5 kilometers, the formation of the Guards Corps under the command of Major General S.T. Biyakova, beating

313

continuous counterattacks, albeit slowly but persistently, gnawed their way to Sinyavino, on the approaches to which they reached on August 29. The attack vector ran along the clearing of a high-voltage power line. Then the 3rd Guards Division of Colonel N.M. Martynchuk aimed at Workers' Settlement No. 5, advancing in the center of the 19th Guards Division of Colonel D.N. Barinova was to take the Sinyavinsky Height and the village of Sinyavino, the 24th Guards Colonel P.Koshevoy was to go through the dense forest and swamps to Lake Sinyavinskoye. To the left of the 265th Infantry Division, Colonel B.N. Ushinsky captured the stronghold of Tortolovo and the 1st Estonian village. On the right flank, the 128th Infantry Division of Colonel I.B. Yeribova immediately took Workers' Village No. 8.

The enemy used the tactics of defense by forces of small groups, no more than a company in number, saddling paths, holding edges and clearings, making extensive use of snipers, who put officers out of action, machine gun crews and guns. On the flanks of the breakthrough, the Germans managed to hold strongholds in the area of Mishkino, Porechye and Gontovaya Lipka. With a tough defense, they fettered significant forces of the attackers and forced them to wage many days of bloody battles.

In an effort to prevent the formation of the Volkhov Front from reaching the Neva in the Sinyavino direction and to eliminate the "very unpleasant breakthrough", the German command hastily transferred additional forces here, including the 170th Infantry Division, which arrived from the Crimea, parts of the 121st Infantry Division. and the 5th Mountain Infantry. They immediately counterattacked. The Germans also tried to use the "tigers" located in the area of the Mga station. However, the tanks, operating on completely unsuitable terrain for them, in the absence of bridges capable of withstanding their weight, could not even reach the battlefield, and they had to be withdrawn back.

Beginning on the third day, the Soviet offensive ground to a halt. First of all, because tanks and infantry were left without artillery and air support,

314

mainly due to the illiteracy of the chiefs, who were unable to dispose of the equipment that had fallen on their heads. The artillery headquarters of the 8th Army "did not have experience in managing large masses of artillery" (another half-educated person - they gave too many guns, and they didn't explain what to do with them), therefore, this management itself was not organized. And the chief of artillery of the front and his staff did not rack their brains with such questions at all, entrusting planning, organization and execution to lower levels. No shock groupings were created, all 24 artillery and guards mortar regiments attached to reinforce Starikov's army were evenly distributed among divisions with a density of 70-100 guns per kilometer of front, although there was a full opportunity to create a density of up to 180 barrels per kilometer in the direction of the main attack. But the principle of concentration of forces and means did not fit in the generals' minds. But after working the forward edge of the enemy's defense (400-1000 m), escorting the advancing units and ensuring the battle in depth was not even planned. Thus, the infantry went forward, the artillery remained in place and was inactive.

I can't say what the "falcons" of General I.P. were doing. Zhuravlev, because on the third day they were not observed over the battlefield. "On that day, not only the ground, but also the air situation changed dramatically," testifies N.K. Koshevoy. - In the morning, our troops became

act very actively enemy aircraft. It flew in groups of 5-15 aircraft at intervals of 20 to 60 minutes ... Enemy aircraft, which appeared suddenly, hung over the area of the 1st Estonian settlement and Tortolovo in a black, roaring mass. The bombers succeeded each other wave after wave in some kind of devilish carousel. Above the battlefield was the roar of explosions of heavy bombs and the bitter smoke of fire. From that moment until the end of the battle, the Germans maintained absolute air supremacy. As a result, the attacking regiments suffered heavy losses and quickly lost their combat effectiveness (historiographers of the 13th Air

315

The army, who have not experienced this "carousel" in their own skin, on the contrary, declare that throughout the entire Sinyavin operation "in general, Soviet aviation prevailed in the air", destroying 215 enemy aircraft. It is a pity that this did not prevent the enemy from destroying our infantry and tanks). |

The newly minted Soviet submachine gunners, in joy, continuously scribbled from their PSH for two days and, having shot all conceivable norms, were left without cartridges: "And it happened because for the first time there were a lot of machine guns at the front ... hook and fired whole discs without a break. Of course, there was also a psychological factor. With a machine gun pressed against the stomach and firing continuously, it is easier to move forward.

On August 31, a moment of shaky balance came. The first echelon, deepening into the enemy defenses at a distance of up to seven kilometers and having used up the "psychological factor" to the last zinc, ran out of steam. The losses of the 8th Army in five days amounted to 16,185 people. The Germans also did not have enough forces to restore the situation.

In this situation, the Military Council of the front decided to enter into battle on the morning of September 1, the 4th Guards Rifle Corps under the command of General N.A. B gene. The commander of the Leningrad Front was asked to use the favorable moment to launch a counterattack.

But these measures did not change the situation for the better. The Guards Corps fell under the "devil's carousel" even in the areas of concentration. Then his formations moved through the vast Sinyavinsky swamps, sometimes operating waist-deep in water, paving their way under continuous shelling and bombing. The control of the troops was constantly violated. Their own artillery and aviation could not cover the deployment of the corps. As a result, he suffered heavy losses even before meeting the Germans. By September 4, the greatest depth of the breakthrough of the troops of the Volkhov Front through the forest between Mga and Sinyavino, where he

316

There were no strongholds, it was 9 kilometers. There were no more than six to the Neva, but it was not possible to advance a single meter further. The enemy pulled the arriving Crimean divisions, units of the 121st and 96th Infantry Divisions from other sectors of the front into the breakthrough area. Tankers of the 12th division from the Bayer group appeared in the Tortolovo area, having been released after the battles for Ivanovskoye.

H. Polman cites excerpts from the captured diary of a Soviet commander in his book: "4.9. Yesterday a combat order was given: a breakthrough to the Leningrad highway to Moskovsky Dubrovka ... it seems that further advance without first expanding the penetration on the flanks is simply stupid. However, our 861st Rifle Regiment, by decision of the corps commander, Major General Ragen, has been attacking all day today, but does not budge. By 6 p.m., the regiment had lost 65% of its rank and file and 100% of its commanders. In total, the 294th Rifle Division operating as part of the corps lost 6,934 men out of 7,288 who entered the battle in September.

They blamed General Hagen, who failed to "implement firm leadership," and appointed Major General S.V. Roginsky, which, in principle, did not change anything.

Fierce fighting continued on the flanks of the resulting breakthrough, where troops from the front's shock group, blocking Mishkino, Porechye and the Kruglaya grove north of Gontovaya Lipka, fought to capture these strongholds. In the grove, which has become yet another bloody symbol of the Volkhov Front, the battalion knot of resistance of the 366th regiment of the 227th division under the command of Colonel Wengler was located. This stronghold, receiving daily reinforcements, was daily attacked by units of the 3rd Guards Rifle Division. On the very first day of the offensive, an entry appeared in the Combat Action Log of the 13th Guards Regiment: "The units have no advance. 13 people remained in the first company, 8 in the second, 20 in the fourth and sixth. Commissar

317

the regiment was wounded, the chief of artillery was killed. A special "surprise" for our soldiers was the German wood-and-earth ramparts. In German reports, this stronghold was nicknamed "Wengler's Nose", in soldier's everyday life - "damned hole".

In fact, the scenario of the Luban operation began to repeat itself: Soviet units were sitting in forests and swamps, the Germans held resistance centers, destroying our infantry with aircraft and artillery, accumulating forces on the flanks of the breakthrough. The clearing remained the only supply line for all Soviet troops. The military council demanded to "increase the pace" of the offensive and reach the Neva as soon as possible.

On September 5 and 6, a partial regrouping of the troops of the Volkhov Front was carried out. The 19th and 24th Guards Rifle Divisions were withdrawn from the 6th Guards Corps. At the same time, Koshevoy's division was deployed with the front to the south and actually went over to the defensive, and its strip north of Lake Sinyavinsky was occupied by the 259th Rifle Division, which was tasked with overthrowing the enemy and advancing towards the Neva. The breakthrough included the 191st Rifle Division of Lieutenant Colonel N.I. Artemenko and the 122nd Tank Brigade of Lieutenant Colonel A.V. Zazimko from the front reserve. They did not have any information about the enemy, about the neighbors, nor did they have maps of the area. Task: take Sinyavino and connect with the Leningrad Front. During redeployment, almost all parts of these formations were subjected to intense German air raids. Entering the battle for Sinyavino on September 7 and continuing to suffer heavy losses, they reached the southwestern shore of the peat bog, but the Germans did not let them go further: "Hundreds of bomber planes were constantly over our location and bombed, bombed endlessly." Lieutenant Colonel Artemenko was killed immediately, on the third day a third of the 191st Rifle

divisions.

Some success was achieved on the left flank of the 8th Army, where the 327th Rifle Division of Colonel N.A. Polyakov by a roundabout maneuver, interacting with the 286th arrow

318

military division of Major General B.M. Kozika, took possession of the stronghold of Voronovo and firmly entrenched in it.

On September 8, the Military Council of the Volkhov Front decided to bring into battle the third echelon - the 2nd shock army. At the same time, the 4th and 6th Guards Corps were reassigned to General Klykov, which completely confused the control system. For reinforcement, 18 artillery and mortar regiments, 3 guards mortar regiments and 14 M-30 divisions were allocated. In total, there were 1244 mortars and 563 guns in the army (it must be borne in mind that Soviet calculations never take into account 45-mm guns and 50-mm mortars). But the rifle formations of the first two echelons were knocked out, 7-10% of the original composition remained in the battalions, the total losses reached 50 thousand people.

A stubborn oncoming battle flared up, some sections passed from hand to hand several times.

But then Manstein appeared on the scene. On the evening of September 4, Hitler called the field marshal and ordered him to intervene immediately, take command of the crisis sector of the front and, using the divisions arriving from the Crimea, prevent the impending catastrophe. Manstein formed two shock groups and on September 10 launched a counterattack under the base of the Soviet breakthrough. The 30th Army Corps, consisting of the 24th, 132nd and 170th Infantry Divisions, advanced from the south; from the north, through the Kruglaya grove, the 26th Corps, which included the 121st Infantry, 5th Mountain Rifle and 28th Mountain Rifle Divisions. For Meretskov and his staff, this was a complete surprise; the Soviet command did not provide for any defensive measures in this case. Meanwhile, the enemy pressed the Soviet troops from the flanks, turning the wedge driven into the German defenses into a "bottle". Our command, as before, continued to set exclusively offensive missions. On the northern flank, the 128th, and after it the 376th rifle divisions unsuccessfully stormed Lipka. In the depths of the breakthrough, the Germans launched a counterattack from Kelkolovo, split the battle formations of the 4th

319

guards corps and surrounded the 137th rifle brigade. It never left the ring. The 374th Rifle Division with tank crews of the 29th Brigade broke through the second enemy defense line to the east of the Big Swamp. But the division was losing 500 men a day, and by September 20 it had 764 fighters. Roginsky's rifle corps had 853 active bayonets left. In the neck of the breakthrough, the 3rd Guards Division, the 53rd, 22nd and 137th brigades with tanks continued their attacks on the Kruglaya grove; The 286th division fought in the German trenches on the northern outskirts of Mishkino; The 265th division was advancing southwest of Tortolovo along the Chernaya River, but was forced to withdraw under continuous bombardment. On September 16, the Germans again captured the 1st Estonian settlement, defending which the 951st Rifle Regiment was completely killed,

From September 9 to September 11, General Govorov tried to organize an offensive in the area of Moskovsky Dubrovka - something sunk into the soul of all the commanders was precisely this "unexpected" place for the enemy. The main goal was to break through the enemy defenses on the left bank of the Neva, capture Mustalovo and, building on success at Sinyavino, link up with units of the Volkhov Front. The 46th, 86th, 70th Rifle Divisions, and the 11th Rifle Brigade were allocated to the strike group. However, two divisions of the first echelon, reinforced by two battalions of front-line junior lieutenants, did not even manage to cross the river. Having fallen under the blows of artillery and aircraft of the enemy, the Leningraders soon lost almost all their means of transportation. Small units that managed to reach the opposite shore were thrown back into the water. On September 12, the Headquarters, by its directive, in view of the fact that the Leningrad Front "turned out to be unable to sensibly organize the crossing of the Neva River and stupidly ruined a large number of commanders and soldiers with its inept actions," ordered the operation to be temporarily stopped. The total losses during the three attempts amounted to about 738 people killed, 2245 wounded, 230 pontoons and boats. Govorov removed command of the Neva Operational

320

groups. In the first half of the month, the Lenfront troops also made attempts to clear the Yam-Izhora region of the Germans, but they also turned out to be unsuccessful.

By September 21, after heavy fighting, Manstein managed to close the ring and cut the only road along which the supply of Soviet troops in the "bag" was going on (Meretskov was just reporting to Stalin the next "plan of the operation to defeat the Sinyavinskaya grouping against the nickname and reach the Neva, assuring the Supreme in the strength of the situation: "I consider it possible to carry out the operation with the available forces of the front"), and in the following days - to repel all attacks from the east, aimed at blocking the 2nd shock army, which was once again in the "cauldron". A painfully familiar picture emerges in Koshevoy's description: "Nanti's attempts to deliver ammunition and food during the day on lontades through forests and swamps were thwarted by the enemy. Groups of carriers of two or three people now fought their way through only at night and often died on the way the death of the brave. It was not possible to regularly supply troops with the help of

aircraft U-2. They could operate only at night, and the cargoes fell more into unsteady bogs, from where it was impossible to extract them ... At the end of September 26, a radiogram was received directly from the front commander. It was ordered by steadfast defense, especially on the left flank, to prevent the enemy from spreading to the north. In conclusion, it was said that the Motherland will not forget us."

According to German data, at least seven Soviet divisions, six rifle and four tank brigades were surrounded. The Germans these days again made a rather stupid attempt to use the "tigers", but they all failed, falling under the fire of Soviet artillery, or got stuck in the swamps.

Now Manstein turned out to be the advancing side in conditions of little use for this terrain. But he did not even think of driving his soldiers into the attack into forests and swamps, but tactically competently repeated the Lyuban variant of liquidating the encircled grouping: "Since the entire area of the "boiler" was covered with dense forest, any attempt from the German

321

to finish off the enemy with infantry attacks would lead to huge human casualties. In this regard, the army headquarters brought up powerful artillery from the Leningrad Front, which began to conduct continuous fire at the "cauldron", supplemented by new air attacks. Thanks to this fire, the forest area in a few days was turned into a field pitted with funnels, on which one could see only the remains of the trunks of the once proud giant trees.

Meretskov also remembered this "continuous fire", however, judging by his recollections, there was no encirclement, although he admits that "in those days, a difficult situation arose in the area covered by the enemy of our troops. The formations and parts were mixed up with each other, their control was broken every now and then". As before, there was little sense from our own artillery: "The army artillery headquarters exercised little control over the use of RVG artillery, and it was not always used for its intended purpose. As a result, the fight against enemy artillery was not organized. Artillery fire was planned, as a rule, hastily. Due attention was not paid to the organization of interaction between artillery and infantry..."

Of the 85,000 who were part of the 2nd shock army before the start of the operation, taking into account the replenishment, 30,988 fighters and commanders remained.

For these reasons, on the evening of September 27, the front commander, without waiting for the sanction of the Stavka, "with pain in his heart" ordered the withdrawal of troops located west of the Black River to the eastern bank, and the thrifty (no, some people - to the equipment) General Klykov added on his own behalf: "I categorically forbid the withdrawal without materiel. All those who left without materiel should be returned back."

But to Meretskov, by dawn on September 29, the "main mass" of the Soviet troops returned "to about the old positions." The marshal nevertheless "forgot" that by that time there were already Germans on the eastern coast: on September 22 they recaptured Tortolovo and captured the heights to the north of it, on the 25th they took Gaitolovo by storm and penetrated further south. Is it true,

322

there was no continuous front, and individual Soviet units managed to get through peat bogs and swampy lowlands to their own. Without troops and without headquarters, General Hagen crawled out of the encirclement.

Scout of the 4th Guards Corps G.G. Borisov recalls: "On September 27, we received an order to withdraw from the front line near Lake Sinyavinskoye and arrive at such and such a square. We arrived at the place at night ... We, active bayonets at the Hagen field headquarters, turned out to be 16 people. On the evening of September 28, Hagen ordered the creation of two groups: one of three people with the task of disarming three burned-out armored cars, removing locks from guns and machine guns. The second group (thirteen people) to receive the last planes with cartridges and crackers. Everything that we cannot carry, drown in

mire. If on our return we do not find the headquarters, we must rely only on our own strength. When leaving on September 29, the corps headquarters ran into the German defenses and almost completely died. Hagen sat for almost a day in a funnel with water; knowing that we should go out in a hurry, recognized us and come out with us."

Stalin, through peppy reports, saw that Meretskov and Klykov again led the 2nd shock army into a trap and demanded an accurate report and urgent measures to save the troops. "For several days, the command of the Volkhov Front and the 2nd shock army cannot give an accurate and clear answer about the situation with the passes south of the Gaitolovo-Kelkolovo road," General Vasilevsky reported on behalf of the leader. - As a result of such criminal carelessness and false self-reassuring information about the situation, it seems that nothing special has happened, the troops can be withdrawn about the passage south of the Gaitolovo-Kelkolovo road. In fact, the troops in this passage are engaged in combat with some unknown "small groups" of the enemy. Moreover, in the presence of completely fresh, replenished 314th Rifle Division, 73rd Rifle Regiment and five divisions leaving the west, these groups are not destroyed, but continue to clog the neck and do not allow the withdrawal of troops of the 2nd Division. army. Such a situation can only exist in

323

the result of a lack of command and control. As can be seen, the command of the front and the 2nd ud. armies do not want to admit the seriousness of the situation west of the river. Black, do not want to directly lead the withdrawal of parts of the 2nd beat. army, and get off with orders torn from the actual situation on the allegedly possible withdrawal of troops of the 2nd ud. army to the area east of Gaytolovo. The Headquarters of the Supreme High Command ORDERS: 1. By 10.00 September 29, 1942. honestly report on the true position of the parts to the west of the river. Chernaya and about the presence of passages in the neck southwest of Gaitolovo. 2. Take direct control of the withdrawal of the 2nd Shock Army in the area east of Gaitolovo directly to yourself and your headquarters. Submit a detailed plan for the withdrawal of troops by 18:00 September 29, 1942." According to Manstein, the fighting in the "cauldron" ended on October 2. During them, the Germans took 12 thousand prisoners, destroyed 244 tanks, over 300 guns and 500 mortars. By this time, as part of the six Soviet divisions (191, 259, 374, 294, 19th Guards) and five rifle brigades (22, 23, 32, 33 and 53rd) assigned to the western coast, there were 14 thousand fighters and commanders and 112 field guns, mostly artillery and rear units. "It is not ruled out," Meretskov reported, "that individuals will still be leaving the western bank in an unorganized manner." In the next ten days, "individuals" came out only 470 people. According to the report of the commander of the 2nd Shock Army to the Military Council of the Front, 108 people left the 19th Guards Division, 687 from the 374th Rifle Division, of which 110 were wounded, 600 from the 191st Division, and 600 from the 259th Division. 659, from the 22nd rifle brigade - 22, from the 23rd - 100, from the 33rd - 234, from the 53rd - 211, from the 132nd - 288 fighters.

The new offensive of the Neva Operational Group under the new command - Lieutenant General D.N. Gusev - was scheduled for September 26. Forcing plani

324

it was planned to carry out on the site Annenskaya, 1st town with three rifle divisions and a rifle brigade.

In advance, 30 pontoons of the Ladoga flotilla, 10 launches and 2,200 boats were secretly delivered to the Neva Dubrovka and to the area of the Tenlo supply platform. In order to hide from the Germans the concentration of floating assets and military equipment, deep trenches were dug across the right bank by four engineer battalions, into which carefully disguised road ruts led from the rear. Boats, sections of pontoons and tanks were hidden in these "pockets" at night, which were planned to be transported on these pontoons.

On the appointed day, the strike force, supported by 117 combat aircraft, ground and naval artillery, together with the marines, began crossing the Neva and quickly

captured a foothold in the area of Arbuzovo and Moscow Dubrovka. At the same time, the 136th division of the 55th Army delivered a diversionary attack on the Tosnensky line.

By the end of the first day, separate regiments of the 70th and 86th divisions and a battalion of the 11th rifle brigade were transferred to the left bank. The second echelon could not cross due to strong fire resistance. Fierce fighting on the revived Nevsky "patch" continued until 6 October. It was not possible to expand the captured bridgehead, break through the defense to the full depth and connect with the Volkhov Front. In the first four days of the operation alone, the Soviet units lost, according to incomplete data, 8,244 men, used up 133,000 shells and mines, and almost all of the fighters. After the defeat of the Volkhovites, the continuation of attacks against the enemy, who had the opportunity to build up his forces without hindrance, did not promise any prospects. Due to the operational inexpediency of holding a bridgehead on the eastern coast, the Stavka decided to evacuate. When all the troops had already been withdrawn, with the onset of dawn on October 9, the reconnaissance sent to the Moscow Dubrovka region did not detect the enemy. In this regard, on the left bank of the Neva was transported

325

a reinforced company of the 70th Infantry Division, which occupied the bridgehead: on the right - ravines north of Arbuzovo, along the front to the highway and on the left - a school in Moscow Dubrovka. On October 20, the "piglet" was accepted by the 46th Infantry Division of Colonel E.V. Kozik.

Opposite settled parts of the 170th infantry. The landscape that opened up to him, which was a giant burial ground, amazed even the worldly-wise veterans of the storming of Sevastopol. "Only the old commanders, who knew the massacre of the First World War, could recall something similar to the Nevsky bridgehead," the division's historian H. Kardel recorded. — Only occasionally did a crushed tree stump stick out on the ground, plowed up by heavy artillery, rocket mortars and aerial bombs. The wrecked tanks stood near the deep craters and trenches leading to the Russian trenches. The arms and legs of dead Russian soldiers protruded from the walls of the trenches. Everything else was covered with earth after the explosions of shells. There were minefields all around.

_ Thus, during the Sinyavino operation Volkhov-

`sky and Leningrad fronts failed to break through the blockade. By chance, it turned out that at the same time, an attempt by the German command to organize a decisive assault on the city was thwarted. Our commanders and chroniclers of the glorious deeds of the "invincible and legendary" with party cards in their pockets attributed this to their merit, pretending that the operation was started for this very purpose: "The calculations of the Nazi command to storm the city of Lenin suffered a complete collapse."

Indeed, the "collapse of calculations" and the refusal to conduct Operation Nordlicht, the German field marshal confirms: "If the task of restoring the front of the 18th Army was completed, then the divisions of our army nevertheless suffered significant losses. At the same time, a significant part of the ammunition destined for the attack on Leningrad was used up. Therefore, there was no question of an early offensive."

326

One could rejoice at the success of Soviet intelligence, which stole enemy plans, or the foresight of the military-political leadership, who unraveled Hitler's intentions, if not for one "but"... Information about the regrouping of German divisions from the Crimea near Leningrad, indicating "need to be checked", the General Staff of the Red Army shared with the fronts only on October 14. And version 0b of the "preemptive strike" was thrown up by Manstein himself, who believed that the Russians had timely tracked the transfer of troops of the 11th Army, and therefore wrote the following in his memoirs about the actions of the Volkhov Front: "... with this offensive, the enemy, obviously, wanted to forestall our advance." The book was only published in 1955.

Prior to that, Soviet propagandists fed the Shcherbakov version to the masses, according to which the attack on Sinyavino was undertaken in order to pull off part of the Wehrmacht forces from the southern sector of the front: "This goal was achieved. Several German divisions, including 4 infantry divisions stationed in the Crimea, namely the 24th, 28th, 132nd and 170th, and destined for operations near Stalingrad and on the Terek, were hastily transferred to the Sinyavino region and were defeated here or thoroughly disheveled by the Soviet troops.

In any case, the battle in Southern Ladoga turned from a military failure almost into a victory for the Red Army. Enemy losses in Soviet reports were estimated at 60 thousand people killed, wounded and captured, up to 200 tanks, more than 600 guns and mortars and 260 aircraft. Marshal Meretskov, who "destroyed" the adversaries with the dashingness of an inveterate political officer, outdid even the Sovinform Bureau, saying that the Germans lost about 60 thousand only in killed and captured. At first, Stalin wanted to remove Kirill Afanasyevich from his post, but, after making sure that he had defeated and "disheveled" Manstein himself, he changed his mind.

True, in Berlin they believed that the victory, and no small one, was won by the Wehrmacht troops, who defeated 7 Soviet divisions in the Sinyavino "cauldron", which was reported to the world by the media of the Third Reich. Moscow name

327

The message of the German command was a shameless lie and voiced its interpretation of the events: "Neither south of Lake Ladoga, nor in any other place, the Nazis surrounded not only a single division, but not even a single Soviet regiment." There was no other general Vlasov, and it would have looked stupid to step on the same rake twice. Therefore, we decided to pretend that the Germans did not surround anyone. Judging by the publications in the Military Historical Journal, the Russian General Staff still believes so today,

During the failed breakthrough of the blockade and the "successful" retreat, the troops of Meretskov and Govorov lost more than 40 thousand people irretrievably and 73.5 thousand wounded, in total almost 114 thousand soldiers and commanders, out of 190 thousand (including "Volkhovites" - 157 thousand), who started the battle. Leningrad historians have doubts about these figures, as they are significantly underestimated: "For they hardly take into account the countless reinforcements destroyed by German aircraft on the way from the place of unloading to the front line, and the reinforcements that arrived in the divisions in the course of hostilities." In addition, our statistical studies

for some reason, only the leg losses, the 8th and 2nd strikes are taken into account

noah armies. The remaining six armies, which were constantly delivering "auxiliary" and distracting strikes, did not seem to take part in the Sinyavino operation. Of the territorial acquisitions - "Our troops retained the resistance centers of Voronovo and Settlement No. 8 captured from the enemy" - Meretskov reported "honestly". Lied, of course.

German losses in the "First Battle of Ladoga" amounted to about 26 thousand people. Field Marshal Manstein suffered a personal loss: on October 29, 1943, during an air raid, his son Ro von Manstein, a lieutenant of the 51st regiment of the 18th motorized division of the 16th army, was killed.

Of course, everything was not in vain: firstly, they disrupted the assault on the Germans, secondly, they "bled the enemy", thirdly, they learned a lot again: "During the operation, the gunners

328

front, having gone through a good school, received the first experience in organizing the actions of large masses of artillery in the offensive and controlling it in battle. The study of this experience required special training of artillery units and increased attention to the development of issues of organizing and conducting artillery reconnaissance ... as well as equipping observation posts, firing positions, shelters, dugouts, planning an artillery offensive,

organization of interaction with infantry and tanks... The training of gunners in orientation on the ground (!!), determining the point of standing using a topographic map, and moving in azimuth was of great importance. Well, it will take place in the second year.

Assessing the actions of the Soviet troops, a veteran of the Polynean SS division F. Huzeman writes: "Then the stupidity of the Russian command in relation to the infantry battle was quite obvious. However, this soon changed, and we felt in our own skin how much the enemy borrowed from our tactics.

Having barely calculated the losses, Meretskov assured the Headquarters that the troops of the Volkhov Front would "behave actively", and put forward "considerations" for a series of private offensive operations. However, Stalin, far from being sure of the defeat of Manstein and fearing enemy strikes "simultaneously in the directions of Mga, Kirishi" and not excluding even an attempt to force the Neva, cooled the ardor of the commander. On October 3, he ordered no offensive operations to be started, but to go on the defensive. On October 5, the Supreme Commander determined that Meretskov again needed the help of Mekhlis, and for the second time appointed Lev Zakharovich a member of the Military Council of the Volkhov Front, demoting A.I. Zaporozhets.

It was just right not to break through the blockade, but to withdraw troops from Leningrad. In the summer of 1942, the Red Army suffered a series of crushing defeats: the Ust-Tosno-Sinyavino operation failed, the bloodbath turned into a

329

the second Rzhev-Vyazemsky operation led by Zhukov, and most importantly, a complete defeat in the south, where the 6th army of Paulus reached the Volga and fought on the streets of Stalingrad, the 1st tank army of von Kleist rushed through the Terek to the Baku oil fields. The country was on the brink of destruction.

On the other hand, by the autumn of 1942, the top military leadership had completely vanquished the hatred mood. It became clear that the troops needed to be trained, the operations to be carefully prepared, that our charters did not correspond to the realities of modern warfare, and "throats" predominated among the generals.

First of all, the Supreme Commander ordered everyone to dig in, and for the first time in the war, the Soviet armies along the entire length of the Soviet-German front began to create a real defense.

Thus, the Western and Kalinin fronts, adopting German and recalling domestic experience, learned to dig trenches, tie them to the terrain, and create an effective multilayer fire system.

Specifically, the Volkhov Front was ordered by the directives of the Headquarters of October 5 and 14 to immediately start building at least three or four defensive lines and evict the entire civilian population from the front line to a depth of 25 km. Cities and settlements should be adapted to long-term all-round defense, turning "every house, every street, every quarter into a fortress", special attention should be paid to the use of stone buildings, basements, underground utilities, wells, factory pipes, and the creation of a developed communication and signaling networks, the use of engineering barriers. To direct the defense, appoint commandants of the garrisons "from among the steadfast commanders." The experience of Stalingrad is clearly felt in the recommendations.

General Khrenov went to the Kruglaya grove, examined the German fortifications and came to the conclusion that "it was not a sin to adopt and develop the experience of the enemy." Without complaints about the labor intensity and lack of engineering equipment, the construction of wood-and-earth

330

fences with firing nests, shelters for personnel, warehouses and first-aid posts. The road network has been improved. It turned out, by the way, that the wood-and-earth fence, just like a steam locomotive or an airplane, is our domestic development, and it was invented by Leningrad engineers called from the reserve, experts in "old Russian architecture".

In Leningrad, on the orders of the Stavka, the Nevsky Frontier was fortified, and the 67th Army was deployed on the basis of the Neva Operational Group. Major General M.P. was appointed commander. Dukhanov.

"Was such a large expenditure of effort and labor justified in the construction of fortifications that the enemy did not try to storm? General Khrenov asks himself. — Was this titanic work a vain reinsurance caused by an insufficient ability to foresee the course of events? I will answer now, as I did then: no!.. The situation as a whole could turn out in such a way that the Nazis, if they knew about the weakness of our defense, would concentrate their forces in one of the sectors and proceed to active operations. "Volkhovskaya notch" did not give them a chance of success. We, having engineering cover, were able to withdraw a significant part of the forces from the defense at the end of the year, thereby increasing the offensive capabilities of the front.

And exactly. On October 8, Stalin, unlike most generals, who never stopped learning, issued an "Order on improving the tactics of offensive combat and on the battle formations of subdivisions, units and formations", in which, in particular, he indicated that "the formation of battle formations by echelon subunits and units not only does not meet the requirements of modern warfare, but also brings harm, since it leads to unnecessary losses, dooms a significant part of the troops to inactivity and deprives our troops of the opportunity to fall on the enemy with all the force of all fire weapons. The order was to stop going into attacks in a crowd in depth, and turn around in a chain, concentrating a maximum of active fighters in the first echelon and

331

fire means; commanders of all levels, in order to develop success or repel a surprise attack by the enemy, have reserves at their disposal;

The next day, the historic Order No. 307 was signed on the establishment of complete unity of command and the abolition of the institution of military commissars in the Red Army.

In November, the Soviet command began to develop a new, fifth in a row, operation to break the blockade of Leningrad.

Chapter 10 THE BALTIC FLEET IN 1942

After the loss of all its bases in Finland, Lithuania and Estonia, the Baltic Fleet found itself locked in the "marquise puddle" - a small space between Kronstadt and Leningrad. Since the end of 1941, the main islands of the Gogland stretch were in the hands of the enemy, which ensured the stability of the planned anti-submarine line, designed to reliably block the access of Soviet submarines to the Baltic Sea. Realizing the importance of these islands, the command of the Baltic Fleet made repeated attempts to return them. So, on December 31, 1941, a detachment of marines consisting of 170 people under the command of Colonel A.A. Barinov, leaving Lavansaari Island and making a 43-kilometer night crossing on thin ice, occupied Bolshoi Tyuters Island. At dawn on January 2, 1942, the detachment again made a night throw and captured the island of Gogland with a sudden blow. However, in late March - early April, German and Finnish detachments recaptured them again, since the command of the Lenfront did not find it possible to allocate forces and means to strengthen the garrisons in a timely manner. New belated attempts by the Soviet side to occupy both islands ended in failure, as historians of the Russian fleet modestly point out, "due to some tactical errors" and severe weather conditions.

Thus, the forward positions of the Soviet troops in the bay were only a few miles west of Kronstadt on the small islands of Seskar and Lavansaari.

333

The Baltic Fleet did not have a single base that would not be shot through by enemy artillery. The exits from Leningrad and Kronstadt were under the blows of German guns and were constrained by mine laying. Soviet surface ships had no chance to go to the open sea, and there was no point in this. Therefore, they were included in the defense of the besieged city, and a significant part of the crews went ashore and joined the ranks of the infantry. However, the order of the Supreme Smooth Commander to expel the Nazi invaders from Soviet soil in 1942 demanded that the Navy command contribute to "powerful blows". People's Commissar N.G. Kuznetsov, in turn, issued a directive emphasizing the need to intensify offensive operations on enemy sea lanes.

The Military Council of the Baltic Fleet, following the instructions of the People's Commissar, presented its views on summer campaign:

"... The main task of the fleet for 1942 is to inflict maximum damage on the enemy in his communications and

`corking Finnish skerries with mines. The great length of the longitudinal communication of the Gulf of Finland and the need in connection with this to have an intermediate maneuverable base for the actions of our light forces and the exit of submarines pose the first task for the fleet - mastering about in Hogland and the island of B. Tyuters>.

The main role in the planned operation was assigned to submarine forces. Despite heavy losses, the Baltic Fleet still had 51 submarines. The boats had to break through the blockade positions in the Gulf of Finland, break out into the expanses of the Baltic and disrupt enemy shipping there. It was supposed to continuously strike sea communications throughout the Baltic Sea for six months, until the onset of freeze-up. The submarines were to operate in three echelons of 10-12 units each.

The plan developed by the headquarters of the brigade of submarines

334

dock led by captain | rank A.M. Stetsenko, at first envisaged operational support for the actions of submarines and even their interaction with aviation. The Fleet Air Force was entrusted with reconnaissance of the system of sentinel service and anti-submarine defense of the enemy before the release of the boats and inflicting strikes on enemy ship patrols. Nlan also assumed the aiming of boats by aircraft at the objects of attack. But these theoretical proposals remained on paper, since by this time almost all naval aviation was involved in land directions. The idea of creating a special air group of the High Command reserve of five bomber and mine-torpedo and five fighter air regiments, which was supposed to inflict powerful strikes on enemy bases in the Gulf of Finland and the Gulf of Bothnia, its surface ships and convoys, remained unrealized. thereby its anti-submarine defense and providing conditions for the "work" of its submarine forces.

Ultimately, the Baltic submariners went on a solo voyage, designed for maximum autonomy, until the torpedoes were completely used up. K | May 10 submarines were technically ready to go to sea. Their crews worked out the organization of service, diving and surfacing on the Neva, which had opened up from the ice, between the Liteiny and Okhtinsky bridges.

Communications on the Baltic Sea were of great strategic importance for the Third Reich. They ensured the use of the Baltic resources, the supply of up to 80% of iron ore, as well as industrial products from Sweden, timber and pulp from Finland, the transfer of troops and weapons to the Soviet-German front. It was practiced to transport strategic raw materials purchased by Sweden in the USA and other countries and forward them to Germany. Enemy transport ships roamed the Baltic freely, without escort.

The Germans and Finns took measures in advance to eliminate the underwater threat to their navigation. Already in

335

In April, they installed artillery batteries, observation posts, direction-finding and hydroacoustic stations on the islands and coast; to complicate the navigation situation, they removed barrier signs, destroyed lighthouses and other coastal landmarks. In the first ten days of May, when the Gulf of Finland was freed from ice, they began to create two PLO lines, the basis of which were minefields, in the area of which "hunter" boats and other small ships patrolled. From the air, reconnaissance aircraft controlled the water space. Steel anti-submarine nets were placed in separate shallow areas. The first line was blocked by the Gulf of Finland at the line of Gogland. Narva Bay. The density of the barriers here reached 170 mines per square mile. The second line ran from the Hanko Peninsula on the Finnish side to Nargen Island off the coast of Estonia. During 1942, the Germans and Finns fielded more than 12,000 mines of various types, including bottom and antenna, and mine defenders. Together with the barriers of 1941, the number of mines in the Gulf of Finland exceeded 21,000. Over 100 different ships and boats were deployed in the areas adjacent to the barriers. These forces and equipment, together with mine positions, formed a single anti-submarine line with a depth of over 150 miles, according to Tribut, "equal to ten Dover barrages" during the First World War. At the same time, in an effort to prevent the deployment of the Baltic Fleet and completely block it, German aviation laid bottom non-contact mines in the island area, in the roads and fairways of Kronstadt.

Nevertheless, during June-November, the command of the Baltic Fleet sent 35 submarines to break through. The output of each of them required a lot of time and effort. On the transition from Leningrad to Kronstadt and further to Lavansaari, which was carried out on the surface, surface ships and boats covered them with fire and smoke screens. Aviation and artillery suppressed batteries

336

enemy on the south coast. On the island of Lavansaari, the folks were fully charging their batteries and receiving the latest intelligence data. There they were constantly threatened by aviation, so they lay on the ground all daylight hours and approached the piers only at night. To the back of Lavansaari began the most difficult stage, about 200 miles long, which the boats had to overcome on their own, without protection and cover, at the maximum possible depths, but not less than 10-15 meters from the bottom, in order to avoid undermining the bottom mines. Having crossed the Gogland anti-submarine position, the submarines were forced to surface to charge their batteries. It was another "deadly trick": in the conditions of "white" nights, to be on the surface for seven hours, roaring diesel engines over the entire Gulf of Finland, unmistakably leading enemy "hunters" to the target. Then it was necessary to overcome one more position and occupy the designated area.

Due to enemy minelaying from the air, an acute shortage of minesweepers and organizational difficulties, the deployment of the first echelon was delayed by almost a month. On May 25, the M-97 entered the sea, which was entrusted with reconnaissance of the enemy's PLO in the Western Gogland reach. In fact, the boat did not reach the given area, did not obtain any intelligence data, for 12 days of navigation, the commander of the "baby" Lieutenant Commander N.V. Dyakov failed to detect either the enemy or his defensive means.

The first echelon began deployment on 3 June and completed it on 4 July. Of the 11 boats scheduled to leave, 9 went to sea, reached the designated positions 7 (Sch-304, Sch-320, Lembit, Sch-303, Sch-317, Sch-406). Submarine Shch-405 I.V. Gracheva, who was on her way to Lavansaari unaccompanied, mysteriously sank on the crossing on June 13, presumably as a result of an accident; M-95 L.P. Fedorova exploded on mines in the area of the Eastern Gogland Reach two days later.

Each of the boats that broke into the Baltic was at sea for five to seven weeks. When acting on com

337

In nikations, the positional method was used as the main one. All seven commanders reported victories. For two months, Soviet submariners, having used up 47 torpedoes, and, as a rule, not observing the results of attacks, chalked up about 20 sunken and damaged enemy ships. In a number of cases, single transports were fired upon by artillery fire. The greatest success was achieved by the first to overcome the anti-submarine lines Shch-317 under the command of Lieutenant Commander N.K. Mokhov. She sank 4 transports, including one Swedish, but on July 12, already on her way home, she died on a minefield; 4 ships destroyed S-7 captain 3rd rank S.P. Lisin, who was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union for this campaign.

The appearance of Soviet submarines off the coast of Sweden, where German ships sailed as if in peacetime, without an escort and with running lights on, came as a surprise to the Germans and Finns. Considering the blockade to be quite effective, they classified the torpedoing of the first ships as a mine explosion and, instead of searching for and investigating submarines, they trawled "dangerous areas". Sovinformbureau helped to sort out the situation, on July 11 it rang out to the whole world about the triumphant successes of the Baltic submariners. The enemy took urgent measures to strengthen the ASW forces, introduced a system of convoys, shifted their routes to Swedish territorial waters and shallow water areas, increased the density of minefields, and strengthened patrol service. The conditions for the operations of submarines began to deteriorate sharply.

To the north-east of Gogland is the small Sommers Island, which in the anti-submarine position of the enemy played the role of a remote post for monitoring the movement of Soviet ships and submarines on the Vostochny reach. There was a Finnish garrison on the island. out of 92 people with 12 guns up to 75 mm caliber, two mortars and 12 machine guns. The command of the KBF decided

338

to take possession of this island. Like the vast majority of our naval and airborne assault operations of the first period of the war, this one was so wonderfully thought out that it could not fail. ,

The landing began on 8 July. It was preceded by an air raid that did not cause any serious damage to the Finns, due to the lack of intelligence about their defenses. Of the 120 bombs dropped, 37 fell into the water, the rest fell outside the enemy's strongholds. Of the 256 Soviet paratroopers, 164 people managed to get on the island, another 77 fighters drowned or were killed at the time of landing, 15 people remained on board the boat. The fire support of the landing force was just as ineffective as the air support, for the same reasons - the lack of reconnaissance, communications, and fire adjustments. During a fierce battle, the marines managed to capture one of the four strongholds.

Shortly after the start of the landing, the Finns sent 2 gunboats, 5 patrol boats and aircraft to help their garrison. At 11 o'clock in the morning they delivered reinforcements to Sommers - 109 fighters. After that, the Finnish side had both firepower and numerical superiority. In the afternoon, the Soviet command also threw in reinforcements of 57 fighters and commanders. At about 17:00, three torpedo boats approached the eastern coast of the island and began landing. At the same time, 13 people drowned along with the only radio station. 23 wounded were removed from the shore, but contact with the landing force could not be established.

By evening, 2 Finnish minelayers arrived in the area, as well as German ships — 2 minesweepers, a floating battery and a mother ship. On the Soviet side, they were opposed by a gunboat, a patrol boat, 2 basic minesweepers, torpedo boats and "hunter" boats.

By the morning of July 9, it was all over. 149 paratroopers surrendered, about 150 died. The Baltic Fleet lost torpedo boats TKA-22, 31, 71, 83, 113, 121 and small "hunter" MO-306; The gunboat Kama and one minesweeper were seriously damaged. On the sunken and

339

up to 100 more sailors were killed on the damaged ships. The losses of the Finns amounted to 21 people killed, 63 wounded. Despite the reports of Soviet sailors and aviators about not sinking and causing heavy damage to ten ships and boats of the enemy, in reality, neither the Finns nor the Germans lost a single floating craft. To eliminate the threat of new landings on Sommers, the Finns soon put east and south of its minefields "Ontajärvi" and "Norppe".

Only with the return of submarines of the first echelon on August 9, the deployment of ten submarines of the second echelon began, which had to operate in more difficult and dangerous conditions. Three of them received damage before forcing the Gogland position and returned to base. Two others were sent instead.

In August, an attempt was made to support the breakthrough of the submariners with a forceful action. A detachment of surface forces was supposed to go out to the islands of Gogland and Bolshoy Tyuters to suppress enemy ASW forces. However, the exit of the guard ship "Burya" and the minesweeper "Fugas", accompanied by patrol and torpedo boats, ended in the death of both ships on the night of August 24 and the abandonment of this attempt.

The area of operation of the second echelon boats (L-3, M-96, S-13, Lembit, M-97, Shch-407, Shch-309, Sh-310, S-9) covered a wide front from the Gulf of Bothnia to the island of Bornholm. Seven of the eight commanders who broke into the Baltic Sea reported success. The L-3 captain of the 3rd rank P.D. Grishchenko, who "destroyed" 6 transports AND "an enemy destroyer of a new construction" (as one might expect, he did not receive a Hero, but was removed from the bridge at the denunciation of his commissar), the submarine "Lembit" captain- Lieutenant A.M. Matiyasevich, which "sank" 3 ships with torpedoes, and S-13 captain-lieutenant P.P. Malanchenko, who "sent 3 vehicles to the bottom" of the Gulf of Bothnia. In total, the results of the actions of the second echelon were estimated at 14 uni

340

well-cared "fascist transports". 49 torpedoes expended. M-97, which went missing in early September, was added to the list of losses.

The enemy, trying to block the entire water column, undertook additional laying of antenna and non-contact mines. In September, the Finns installed a net barrier in the Northern Gogland Pass and in the Kalbodagrundl area. This fact went unnoticed by naval intelligence, and the headquarters of the fleet still recommended to the commanders to use the Northern Passage for a breakthrough. Finnish submarines occupied positions in the Gulf of Finland and the Aland Sea. During daylight hours, they lay on the ground and conducted hydroacoustic observation, and at night they tacked on the surface. A PLO search and strike group operated in the Gulf of Bothnia.

The Military Council of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet decided to begin the withdrawal of submarines of the third echelon, without waiting for the return of the last submarines of the second echelon. In order to avoid international complications, by order of the People's Commissar of the Navy, they were now forbidden to attack ships flying the Swedish flag and any ships in Swedish territorial waters.

The first group of boats of the third echelon (5 units) began leaving the bases on September 15–23, the second (4 units) on October 1–10, and finally the third (7 units) on October 17–November 4. Moreover, L-3, Shch-303, Shch-320, Shch-406, M-96, S-9, S-13 and S-7 broke through the enemy anti-submarine defense for the second time.

Submarines of the third echelon "managed to destroy" about 15-17 transports and several small warships. They returned with victory to the S-13 base, which, under the command of the captain of the 3rd rank, V.A. Turaeva the longest combat campaign during the war years (58 days) and sunk 3 transport ships, D-2 captain of the 3rd rank RV. Lindenberg, which sent a transport to the bottom and damaged the Deutschland railway ferry (and at the same time, this ferry is listed as "damaged" by mines exposed by the L-3 underwater minelayer), Shch-406 of Captain 3rd Rank Osipov, which destroyed

341

3 ships, S-9 captain-lieutenant A.I. Mylnikova, who sank the transport and damaged the tanker.

This time there was a heavy price to pay for success: half of the boats were lost. They went missing while crossing anti-submarine lines Shch-320, Shch-302, Shch-304, Shch-306. Were sunk by Finnish submarines and patrol boats Shch-311, Shch-308, Shch-305 and Krasnoznamnaya S-7. The commander of the latter, Hero of the Soviet Union S.P. Lisin and three of his sailors were captured. The Baltic Fleet lost experienced crews who had repeatedly crossed the Gulf of Finland. The commanders I.M. were killed. Vishnevsky, Ya.P. Afanasiev, D.M. Sazonov, N.I. Smolyar, A.S. Pudyaikov, L.N. Kostylev, V.D. Nechkin.

Sergei Prokofievich Lisin went through Finnish, German and, as a "traitor of the motherland" was supposed to, Soviet prisons. The Golden Star was returned to him only in 1958.

Naturally, the "sea wolves" could not yield to the "boots" in heroism. About how the steady growth of the combat score and the sunk tonnage of the Baltic submariners was achieved, Grishchenko himself, already in retirement, told the St. Petersburg author Oleg Strizhak: "The most obscure and confusing thing was the count of victories. The victory needed "confirmation". Ideally, that is, according to the instructions, it was necessary to do so. The commander conducts an attack, hits the target. Then he invites two reliable, verified witnesses to the periscope. They look into the optics at a sinking target, evaluate its class, displacement and confirm that the target has sunk. About what, behind three signatures, the act is written. And such acts were regularly written throughout the war and presented to the authorities, although the last cat in the coastal galley knew that this was all a lie.

, It's good if the boat comes across a lonely defenseless layba. You can surface and, smoking, look from the bridge as she sinks. But serious goals are guarded by convoys. The commander managed to enter the attack course unnoticed - his happiness. But the torpedo went — the boat found itself. Periscope down! Steep trim on the nose, and,

342

falling off, deeper and further away. The escort ships will now cling to you with sonar, plow the depth with a series of bombs. And the only "confirmation" - they heard an explosion. Or two. Where did the torpedo hit - in the transport? To the security ship? Into the rock? This is not known to anyone on the boat. And if they got into the transport, did he drown or not? And if the transport was drowned - was it great? One commander knows. The commander saw him through the periscope for several seconds, through rain, fog or in the darkness of the night. And the commander reports on his return: he drowned a cargo ship, twenty thousand tons. Matiyasevich Alexei Mikhailovich, a famous submariner (before the war he was a captain of the merchant fleet), argued with the boat commanders: "There are no such large ships in the Baltic now! Well, four, well, five thousand tons. And you turned down - twenty!

Boat commanders were offended by him. Matiyasevich himself wrote honestly in his reports: transport, about two thousand tons. For this, the authorities were offended by Matiyasevich. The authorities received orders for their subordinates, and they needed "significant" victories...

Grishchenko and Matiyasevich spoke of Travkin with contempt and mockery. Travkin had eleven victories to his credit, he wore the Gold Star. It turned out that he had only one victory, an insignificant ship. The rest is the fruit of deliberate misinformation. Travkin had

"reliable" witnesses, a paramedic and a commissioner. They looked through the periscope, signed the act. Only the attack was false. They fired at the shore or into the clear sea. The crew guessed, but kept quiet. War is such a thing, you blurt out too much - and they will bury you in a penal company, in the Sinyavinsky swamps.

The system worked and suited everyone. Anyway: the crew spent weeks sitting in the "pipe", which at any moment could become and often became a common grave, every minute of the campaign was associated with a mortal risk - forgive the military for their "pranks". Another thing is that after the war, from THIS "linden tree" a spreading "Chronicle of Naval Glory" grew up, under the shadow of which the real history of the Soviet fleet was buried.

343

The onset of winter and the approach of freeze-up forced by the beginning of December to stop the operations of submarines on enemy sea lanes and return them to their bases. From June to November 1942, Soviet submariners, having lost 12 crews, destroyed in the Baltic, according to official data, about 60 enemy ships with a total tonnage of up to 150,000 tons. According to the enemy, the KBF submarines sank and damaged no more than 10-15 transport ships in six months, including several Swedish ships torpedoed in the territorial waters of neutral Sweden. True, in September, the German command had difficulties in organizing the escort service due to the lack of escort ships, as a result of which many transports had accumulated in German and Finnish ports, waiting in line.

Chapter 11

OPERATION "ISKRA" (January 12-25, 1943)

In the autumn of 1942, the attention of the whole world was focused on one point of the Soviet-German front - Stalingrad. The city has long turned into piles of ruins, the army of V.I. Chuikov, bleeding, divided into three parts, held only a narrow strip of the Volga bank. Both sides continuously built up their forces, and Stalingrad held on, turning into an "all-devouring focus", in which battalions, regiments and divisions of the Wehrmacht burned down. Hitler removed them from other sectors of the front and threw them into the battle raging in the south. From the beginning of October, the outflow of the most combat-ready formations began from Army Group North. The 8th Air Corps relocated to the Stalingrad area, left for the marshal's baton, and soon Field Marshal Manstein also ended up near Stalingrad.

The 12th Panzer, 20th Motorized, 269th, 93rd, 291st, 58th and 225th Infantry Divisions left the 18th Army. In return, Lindemann received the 69th Infantry Division, as well as the "conditionally fit" 1st and 10th Airfield Divisions. The formation of airfield divisions, due to heavy losses in the ground forces, began on the initiative of Goering in the second half of September 1942. Initially, they did not have a regimental level, but consisted of four battalions and an artillery battalion, they were manned by personnel of the ground services of the Air Force and anti-aircraft artillery, who did not have combined arms combat skills, they had

345

light, including Russian three-rulers. Thus, the German grouping near Leningrad decreased quantitatively and deteriorated qualitatively.

By the end of 1942, the main forces of the Leningrad Front - the 42nd and 55th armies - were defending on the line of Uritsk, Pushkin, south of Kolpino, Porogi, having against them the 215th infantry, 250th Spanish, 5th mountain rifle, the SS Police Division and the 2nd SS Infantry Brigade. According to the headquarters of the front - about 49 thousand soldiers and officers. The 30-kilometer strip along the right bank of the Neva from Poroga to Ladoga with a small foothold in the area of Moscow Dubrovka was held by the 67th Army, formed in October on the basis of the Neva Operational Group, under the - ral-lieutenant M.P. Dukhanov. It originally included the 45th

guards, 46th and 86th rifle divisions, 11th and 55th rifle divisions, 35th ski brigades, 16th fortified area, 86th and 118th separate tank battalions, eight artillery and mortar regiments. At the same time, the 55th brigade defended the military automobile road from the south, which passed through the ice of Lake Ladoga. But on the opposite bank of the Neva, the 170th division of the enemy and a security battalion dug in - up to 11 thousand people. On the Oranienbaum bridgehead, besieged by the 10th and 9th Luftwaffe airfield divisions with a total number of up to 10 thousand, there was the Primorsky task force of Major General A.N. Astana, consisting of the 48th, 42nd and 168th rifle divisions, the 48th (former 2nd Marine Brigade), 71st (former 5th Brigade) and 50th (formed on the basis of the 3rd Marine Regiment) rifle brigades. On the Karelian Isthmus, on a 75 km long front, covering the northern approaches to Leningrad, four divisions of the 23rd Army of Major General A.I. Cherepanov. Just as firmly stood opposite the 15th, 10th, 2nd and 18th divisions of the Finnish task force, numbering about 30

thousands of people.

346

The actions of the ground troops were supported by three air divisions of the 13th Air Army created in November by Lieutenant General S.D. Rybalchenko - 450 aircraft. The Baltic Fleet, based at the mouth of the Neva and Kronstadt, covered the coastal flanks of the front troops and supported their actions with its aircraft and artillery fire. The air defense of the city was carried out by the Leningrad Air Defense Army, the "Road of Life" and transshipment bases on the shores of Lake Ladoga covered parts of a separate Ladoga air defense region.

Thus, the blockade ring, in which there were thirty divisions, was directly held by seven German and four Finnish infantry divisions.

Volkhov Front, consisting of six combined arms and one air armies - 29 rifle, 1 artillery, aviation divisions, 1 fortified area, 8 rifle, 3 ski, 7 tank brigades, breakthrough tank regiment, 7 separate tank battalions, 29 separate artillery and mortar divisions regiments, 4 regiments and 4 battalions of rocket launchers, etc., etc., under the unchanging command of General Meretskov, acted in a position unchanged from the moment of his creation - in a 300-kilometer strip from Ladoga to Lake Ilmen. On the right wing from Lake Ladoga to the Kirov railway there were formations of the 2nd shock and 8th armies. The 14th Air Army had 400 aircraft. On the same line, a little to the west, nine enemy divisions dug in from north to south - 227, 1, 223, 69, 132, 61, 11, 217, 21st.

All troops of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts were opposed by the 18th field army of General Lindemann, which consisted of 23 calculated divisions, including 18 infantry, 3 airfield, | a mountain rifle division, an SS brigade and separate units of two security divisions - not a single tank and not a single motorized division. They, like the entire Army Group North, were supported by 150-200 aircraft of the 1st Air Fleet.

347

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On November 22 (Operation Uranus began near Stalingrad on November 19 to defeat the group of Field Marshal Paulus) The Military Council of the Leningrad Front reported to the Headquarters of the All-Union Command of its views on military operations for the winter period. The document specifically stated:

“... The Leningrad Front must start preparing, together with the Volkhov Front, an offensive operation in order to break through the blockade and thereby achieve a decisive change in the operational position of the front ... Assessing the various directions for striking, we consider it most advantageous to organize a breakthrough front of the enemy in the Shlisselburg direction with a breakthrough front width of 10 km and for the Volkhov front, respectively, in the Lipka-Mishkino sector with a strike on Sinyavino by both fronts.

Stalin approved these proposals on December 2. The specific tasks for the troops of the fronts were determined by the directive of the Headquarters of December 8, 1942: "By joint efforts of the Volkhov and Leningrad fronts, defeat the enemy grouping in the area of Lipka, Gaitolovo, Moskovskaya Dubrovskaya. ka, Shlisselburg, thus break the siege of the city of Leningrad, by the end of January 1943, complete the operation. Having secured a strong defense at the turn of the river. Moyka, pos. Mikhailovsky, Tortolovo, ensure the communications of the Leningrad Front ... "

Govorov and Meretskov were instructed to prepare an operation with the code name "Iskra" by January 1, 1943. The coordination of the actions of both fronts was entrusted to the representative of the Headquarters, Marshal K.E. Voroshilov.

Nothing original constellation of strategists came up with, except to gather even more troops and equipment and inflict a crushing frontal blow on the shortest distance through the Shlisselburg ledge. Only this time they decided to make their way even closer to the Ladoga coast. After covering about six kilometers, the troops of the two fronts were to meet in the area of the railway line that went through Workers' Settlements No. 5 and

348

No. 1. Then, turning to the south, the shock groups were to advance to the line of the Moika River, Tortolovo, reliably ensuring the communications of the Leningrad Front from the south. After a ten-day rest in the first half of February, an operation to defeat the enemy in the Mga region and clear the Kirov railway with access to the Voronovo, Sigolovo, Voitolovo, Voskresenskoye line was to follow.

Naturally, the conditions of the area did not get better, and the Germans invested all their free time, effort and skill in improving the "Ladoga fortress". The workers' settlements with stone buildings located along the roads were adapted for all-round defense, the entire space around them was turned into a continuous fortified zone with a developed network of trenches, trenches, shelters, dugouts (which had underground tiers), reinforced concrete walls, earthen fences and shafts, saturated with firepower and heavily mined. In fact, the entire territory of the ledge turned into a continuous fortified area.

It was planned to solve this "problem" simply and unpretentiously: 22 rifle divisions, 14 rifle and ski divisions, 7 tank brigades, numbering more than 300 thousand soldiers and commanders, with the support of 530 tanks, 5300 guns and mortars and 1,000 aircraft of the 13th and 14th Air Armies, the Air Force of the Baltic Fleet and long-range aviation. The enemy grouping in the Shlisselburg-Sinyavino ledge consisted of four divisions of the 26th Army Corps and one regiment of the 5th Mountain Rifle Division; according to Soviet data, 60 thousand people, about 700 guns and mortars, up to 50 tanks and assault guns.

In the process of preparation for the operation, the Soviet side applied an operational "novelty": for the first time in 16 months, blockades, after four failed attempts to break through, the commanders of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts

349

they met, coordinated their actions, established lines of demarcation and signals of mutual identification, and even agreed that if the troops of one of the fronts fail to reach the line planned for them, then the troops of the other "do not stop the movement, but continue yut move towards until the connection.

Seeing a worthy example of the authorities, aviators and gunners began to make friends with the headquarters. The former distributed objects and developed a "shuttle" method of action, which consisted in the fact that the planes of the 14th Air Army, after striking targets, landed on the airfields of the Leningrad Front, where they refueled, received a bomb load and flew out for a second strike. The aircraft of the 13th Air Army did the same. The second pledged to help each other with fire

friend and fulfill the orders of rifle troops, regardless of front-line affiliation. For the first time, the control posts of the air armies were located near the command post of the commanders of the breakthrough armies.

It was also unusual that almost a month was allotted for preparation, during which it was necessary to accumulate

forces and means, to carry out their covert regrouping and concentration, "to teach troops to break through heavily fortified positions in a wooded and swampy area, to put together units, to work out issues of interaction between infantry and aviation, tanks and artillery."

Training fields and special camps were equipped for training sessions and training in the rear.

Leningraders at the Toksovsky training ground created a defensive line similar to the one that was to be broken through. Regimental exercises with live firing were held here, the infantry was trained to follow the barrage of fire at a distance of 100 meters. On sections of the Neva within the city limits, methods were worked out for overcoming damaged areas of ice, storming a steep, icy, fortified shore with bunkers. Troops on the Volkhov front also underwent similar training, where they formed 83 assault detachments, including sappers, submachine gunners, pool

350

tapers, flamethrowers, guns and escort tanks. Particular attention was paid to the development of methods for storming wood-and-earth fences, peat, snow and ice ramparts. It was more difficult with the issues of interaction between military branches, they were more or less agreed upon only for the initial period of the battle.

The most time-consuming work was the preparation of the initial areas for the shock groupings of the fronts. It was necessary to increase the number of trenches and communication passages, shelters for personnel, open and equip firing positions for artillery, mortars, tanks, arrange ammunition depots. The total volume of earthworks on each front was in the hundreds of thousands of cubic meters. All work was carried out manually, at night, without violating the normal behavior of the troops occupying the defense, in compliance with camouflage measures. At the same time, roads and columned paths, ditches and beds were built through the swamps, which abounded in the initial areas, minefields were cleared, and passages in the barriers were prepared.

To the north of Novgorod, the Volkhovites imitated violent activity, indicating a false concentration of a large mass of troops and equipment, and regularly carried out reconnaissance in battle.

On the Lenfront, it was also required to make means to overcome the high bank of the Neva and areas of damaged ice cover. For this purpose, hundreds of plank shields, assault ladders, hooks, ropes with hooks and "cats" were prepared. After considering a number of options (including the creation of a canal in the ice of the Neva, followed by building a pontoon bridge or reinforcing the ice by freezing cables into it), the problem of crossing the Neva for tanks and heavy artillery was solved - on wooden "rails" laid on sleepers.

From December 15 to 18, General Govorov held a military game on the topic: "Breakthrough prepared by the combined arms army

351

Noah defense of the enemy with the crossing of the river in winter conditions. The game was based on the "real situation" in the zone of the upcoming offensive, as far as it was represented in the Soviet headquarters, mainly according to aerial photography.

In fact, this time too, information about the German defense was rather scarce. Perhaps a bird's-eye view of enemy positions was quite enough for the front commanders—Meretskov, for example, proudly reports that aerial photography

"provided rich material," but at the level of a machine-gun embrasure, the view is somewhat different, and the search for enemy targets with the help of aircraft is a waste of fuel. Meanwhile, this was limited. "The commanders of the units and formations did not care that, at the beginning of the offensive, the nature of the enemy's defense, its strengths and weaknesses were completely revealed, the groupings, combat strength and combat capability of the enemy were revealed," writes the researcher of the Iskra operation, Colonel V. M. Yarkhunov. "Commanders often based their decisions on aerial photography data without specifying them by means of ground reconnaissance. This led, especially in wooded areas, to a superficial and incomplete study of the enemy. As a result, the commanders of subunits and units deprived themselves of the opportunity to make a decision appropriate to the situation. Shortcomings in the conduct of intelligence led to the fact that the troops constantly ran into all sorts of surprises." K. By the end of December, preparations for the operation were basically completed. However, due to a sudden thaw, the ice cover on the Neva was not strong enough, and the swamps were difficult to pass. Therefore, on December 27, the front commanders turned to the Headquarters with a request to postpone the start of the offensive to January 10-12. Consent has been received. Marshal Meretskov points out that it would be more correct to start active operations in general in February, but, once again, "Leningrad could not wait so long."

352

By November, the city was almost deserted. As a result of mass deaths, evacuations and additional conscriptions, the population of Leningrad decreased by 2 million in one year and amounted to 650 thousand people, of which 80% worked. The food problem was solved, there were no interruptions in the supply of food to the population. According to Professor A.P. Veselov, before the breakthrough of the blockade, 270,000 Leningraders received an increased food ration compared to the all-Union, in addition, 153,000 people visited canteens with three meals a day.

The death rate of the population was approximately 3.5 thousand people per month. In autumn, a cable was laid along the bottom of Lake Ladoga, through which electricity was supplied to the city from the Volkhovskaya HPP. Fuel continued to flow through the summer pipeline. On October 22, the Germans tried to send troops to Sukho Island, the battery of which covered the Ladoga highway, but the joint actions of the garrison under the command of Senior Lieutenant I.K. Gusev, patrol ships and fleet aviation were repulsed with great damage to themselves.

Since mid-December, the operation of the ice military road was resumed, which functioned around the clock. The construction of a 35-kilometer railway overpass across Lake Ladoga was started, day and night, multi-meter piles were continuously driven, which were installed every two meters.

In the diary of the instructor of the party committee of the Kirov Plant L.P. Galko has an entry dated December 27, 1942: "I visited the city. I tried to briefly compare the situation today with the situation on December 27, 1941. At that time, the dead were carried on sledges wrapped in rags. People could hardly walk, fell from exhaustion, water pipes did not work, there was no lighting. Today the situation is completely different. In the morning I went to the city after breakfast and felt full. At the Narva Gate I took a tram (in the past

353

year went from the factory on foot). In the tram, people are talking animatedly, it is felt that they are not hungry ... Since December 15, electric light has appeared in a number of districts in residential buildings. Therefore, in principle, if it benefited the cause and made it possible to fully achieve its goals, Leningrad could wait another month and wait.

In any case, the Soviet troops received two more weeks to prepare and the opportunity to calmly meet the new year 1943, and at the same time to take stock of the past year. If in general for the country and the Red Army it was notable, on the one hand, for their catastrophic defeats in the south, on the other, for the strategic Stalingrad victory, then in the north

the wing of the Soviet-German front had nothing to boast of. For the whole of 1942, the Germans did not carry out a single offensive operation here. Our armies attacked daily.

As a result, the total losses of the Leningrad Front amounted to more than 319 thousand killed and wounded; the assets include the liberation of the settlements of Putrolovo and Yam-Izhora and a piece of land soaked with blood and stuffed with metal near Moscow Dubrovka. The Volkhov Front lost 592 thousand people. Meretskov convinces that this is normal: "This is one of the features of the military profession. To save millions, we throw tens of thousands of people into battle, knowing that many thousands will die. When a military leader plans an operation, he not only understands that there will be human casualties, but also provides for approximately possible losses, because he does not want to miscalculate and later suffer even greater losses as a result of underestimating a number of factors. Such is the logic of war... I have always been very worried about any losses. I am compelled to say this here, even if someone regards it as an inherent weakness in me. All of them, of course, are abstractly sorry, but their own shirt is closer to the body. Due to the inherent "weakness" of the commander and due to the "features" of his professional training, the Volkhov Front in 1942 was knocked out by 170 percent.

354

Comrade and became the absolute champion among all Soviet fronts in terms of such an indicator as the percentage of losses to the number of personnel, overtaking even the Western and Stalingrad. Interestingly, did Meretskov foresee this when "planning operations", or did he miscalculate? At the end of the year, the village of Pogostye was taken and the village of Gaitolovo was left, and the marshal gave up on the millions he had saved.

"The preparation raises no doubt about the successful outcome of the operation," Marshal Voroshilov reported to Moscow. "About the Iskra, by all indications, until the enemy is smart." But Voroshilov's complacency rather alarmed than reassured Stalin, and just in case, he decided to send G.K. Zhukov, "look, if everything is done." |

On January 10, 1942, General of the Army Zhukov, a Stavka representative, arrived at the Volkhov Front, met with Voroshilov and Zhdanov, and visited the command posts of the 8th and 2nd shock armies. The next day, he listened to the reports of the chiefs of the armed forces on the readiness for the operation, making a few remarks about the use of artillery and tanks. At this time, near Stalingrad, Soviet troops launched Operation "Ring" to eliminate the Paulus group.

On the night of January 11, the troops took their starting position.

The Leningrad Front dealt the main blow with the forces of the 67th Army in the area between the 8th hydroelectric power station and Shlisselburg in the direction of Maryino, Workers' Settlement No. 5, Sinyavino. The general plan was as follows: "Defending the right bank of the Neva and the ice track of Lake Ladoga by units of the 46th Rifle Division, the 55th Rifle and 35th Ski Brigades and the 16th Fortified Region, overcome the Neva River on ice, break through the enemy defenses on the front of Moscow Dubrovka, Shlisselburg and, delivering the main blow in the general direction on Sinyavino, destroy

sinyavinsko

355

Shlisselburg grouping of the enemy and capture the strongholds of Arbuzovo, elev. 22.4, Workers' settlement No. 1 and Shlisselburg In the future, establish a common front with the oncoming shock grouping of the Volkhov Front and develop a strike to the southeast.

The army of General Dukhanov consisted of 7 rifle divisions, 6 rifle, 2 ski and 3 tank brigades, 28th artillery division, 5th heavy guards mortar brigade, 3 rocket artillery regiments, 22 artillery and mortar regiments, a large number of separate divisions and batteries. The total number of troops and equipment was more than 133 thousand people, 222 tanks, 1873 guns and mortars. The achieved density of artillery reached 150 barrels per kilometer of the front, twice the same figure during

counteroffensive at Stalingrad. In order to reliably suppress the manpower and firepower of the enemy at the forefront and not damage the ice cover on the Neva, 286 guns were exposed to direct fire. In addition, to assist the troops of the 67th Army,

"88 naval guns with a caliber of 130-406 mm.

The operational formation of the army was planned in two echelons: in the first, the 45th Guards, 286th, 136th and 86th rifle divisions, the 61st tank brigade and the 86th and 118th tank battalions (a total of 140 light tanks capable of overcoming river without additional strengthening of ice); in the second - the 13th and 123rd divisions, 102nd, 123rd and 142nd rifle, 152nd and 220th tank brigades; the 11th, 55th, and 138th rifle and 34th ski brigades are in reserve. The 46th Rifle Division and the 35th Ski Brigade took up defensive positions on the right bank of the Neva on the flanks of the army. Tanks, in view of the shallow depth of the operation and unsuitable terrain, the commander decided to use for the direct escort of the infantry.

These forces were opposed by the 328th Infantry Regiment of the 227th Infantry Division of General von Skotga, the 170th Infantry Division of General Sander in full force and the 100th Regiment of the 5th Mountain Division, which had no more than 30 tanks,

356

about 400 mortars and guns. The defensive line of the Germans passed along the left bank of the Neva, the height of which reaches 12 meters. The coast was artificially iced, heavily mined, and had almost no convenient natural exits. There were also two powerful nodes of resistance, one of which consisted of the buildings of the 8th hydroelectric power station, brick houses of the 2nd towns. and for another, the enemy used the numerous buildings of Shlisselburg and its outskirts. For every kilometer of the front there were 10-12 bunkers and up to 30 guns and mortars, and trenches of a full profile stretched along the entire bank of the Neva. The middle defensive line passed through Workers' settlements No. 1 and No. 5, Podgornaya and Sinyavino stations, Workers' settlement No. 6, and Mikhailovsky settlement. There were two lines of trenches, a Sinyavino knot of resistance, cut-off positions, and strong points. This line was the position of the divisional reserves (up to one regiment) of the German grouping. 5. The entire area, especially on the section of the railway line between Sinyavino and the 8th hydroelectric power station, was shot through by flanking and crossfire.

The Volkhov Front, which managed to receive five more rifle divisions, concentrated its main efforts on its right flank, where the 2nd shock army dealt the main blow - 12 rifle divisions, 4 rifle and ski divisions, 4 tank brigades, 4 separate tank battalions, 21 artillery and a mortar regiment, 2 engineering brigades and 6 separate sapper battalions, under the command of Lieutenant General V.3 in December. Romanovsky. The army was to break through the enemy's defenses in the sector of the village of Lipka, Gaitolovo and, developing the offensive in the direction of Workers' Settlement No. 8, Sinyavino, unite with the troops of the Leningrad Front.

357

From the north, the 12th ski brigade was to make a round on the ice of Lake Ladoga and attack the enemy west of Lipka. The breakthrough front was 12 km, and the army delivered the main blow on a 6-kilometer section. In the future, it was necessary to develop the offensive in a southerly direction. To reinforce the troops, four anti-aircraft artillery divisions, ten mortar regiments, and two rocket artillery regiments were formed in December; The Headquarters allocated more than 80 echelons of ammunition. The operation involved 2,885 guns and mortars, which accumulated 4-6 rounds of ammunition (also for the first time). For each kilometer of the breakthrough front, an average density of 160 trunks was achieved, in the direction of the main blow - more than 200, and on

section opposite the Kruglaya grove - 360 guns and mortars. Up to 300 guns were put forward for direct fire.

The 2nd shock army was built in two echelons: in the first - 128, 372, 256, 327, 314, 376th rifle divisions, reinforced by artillery regiments and sapper units, the 122nd tank brigade and the 32nd guards tank regiment breakthrough, 501st, 502nd, 503rd and 507th tank battalions; in the second - the 18th, 191st, 71st, 11th, 239th rifle divisions, 16th, 98th and 185th tank brigades; in the combined arms reserve - the 147th rifle division, the 22nd rifle, 11th, 12th and 13th ski brigades. -

The actions of the 2nd Shock Army, numbering almost 140,000 people, were supported by 2,100 guns and mortars, more than 500 M-8 and M-30 rocket launchers, and 217 tanks. The 2nd artillery division of the RVGK, two M-30 heavy guards mortar brigades and four M-13 guards mortar regiments were concentrated here.

The 8th army of General Starikov, numbering over 52 thousand fighters and commanders, with its right-flank formations - the 80th, 265th, 286th and 364th divisions and the 73rd naval rifle brigade - was supposed to break through the enemy defenses in the Gaitolovo, Mishino and advance in the direction of Tortolovo, the village of Mikhailovsky. them under

358

held 785 guns and mortars and 92 tanks as part of the 25th breakthrough regiment, 107th and 502nd tank battalions.

The 227th Infantry Division (without one regiment), the 1st Infantry Division, the 374th Regiment of the 207th Security Division and the 425th Regiment of the 223rd Infantry Division were defending against two armies of the Volkhov Front. The defensive line of the enemy passed from the village of Lipka through the Workers' settlement No. 8, the Kruglaya grove, Gaitolovo, Mishino, Voronovo and further south. A continuous trench ran along the front edge, covered with minefields, gouges and barbed wire, and a second one was dug in some areas. Where the swampy terrain did not allow to go deep into the ground, the Germans erected ice and bulk ramparts, put up two-row log fences. Lipka, Workers' Settlement No. 8, Kruglaya Grove, the villages of Gaitolovo and Tortolovo were turned into especially powerful centers of resistance.

On the night before the offensive, Soviet aviation delivered massive strikes against enemy positions in the breakthrough zone, airfields and railway junctions. Meetings and rallies were held in all regiments, battalions and companies.

At 9.30 on January 12, 4800 barrels hit simultaneously. Artillery preparation in the zone of the 67th Army lasted 2 hours and 20 minutes and | hour 45 minutes - in the 2nd shock. A wall of fire and smoke, rising above the German positions, covered the entire horizon. Towards the end, despite adverse weather conditions, thousands of bombs were dropped by the aviation of the 13th and 14th air armies. At 11.15, turning on the full volume "Get up, the country is huge ...", the Volkhov divisions went on the offensive. After 35 minutes, the advanced units of the Leningraders rolled onto the Neva ice to the sounds of the "Internationale" and the cover of the fire shaft.

Each Soviet division of the first echelon was cut through a three-kilometer section of the breakthrough, one rifle division with a tank battle attached to it was opposed by one German regiment. The famous Russian

359

attack: in thick chains, wave after wave, to the last soldier:

"In close formation on one line, they quickly walked across the Neva on absolutely even, snow-covered ice. There was less than a meter between them. Ahead of them were the real bogatyrs — the sailors of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet; detachments of sappers with their

mine detectors (indeed, in the divisions of the 67th Army, assault groups were recruited from sailors).

In the trenches near Maryino, soldiers of the 2nd Battalion of the 401st Grenadier Regiment observed the same picture. "They've gone crazy," they said. Riflemen of the 240th Motorcycle Squadron, holding a position on the shore to the right of the Gorodok hospital, shouted to each other: "They think they killed us all!" And they clung even tighter to their machine guns ...

A terrible shaft of fire from Russian artillery moved far inland. The forward observers of the German artillery, meanwhile, bent over the radios, calling their batteries and regiments, passing them new targets: "Defensive fire in the square ..." In a moment, shells from the left howitzers and guns howled over the German positions and fell on the ice. The Neva, a curtain of fire and steel descended in front of the German strongholds... German machine guns rumbled. Mortars hit, rifle shots clicked. As if knocked down, the attackers fell on the ice. Many got up again. Let's run. "Hooray!" But only a few people reached the icy bank of the river. There they came under aimed fire from German infantrymen. They fled or died. IN

Naldu had a second wave. Third, fourth and fifth.

In front of the hospital and power plant on the Neva, the dead and wounded lay in large black piles. Wave after wave choked, mostly not even reaching the broken steel beams in the steep bank.

The Soviet commanders, who studied the enemy's defense using photographic schemes, almost immediately "stumbled upon surprises." On the right flank, in the offensive sector of the 45th

360

Guards Rifle Division, commanded by Hero of the Soviet Union, Major General A.A. Krasnov, the gunners were unable to suppress long-term enemy firing points, because they were unaware of their existence. When crossing the river, the regiments suffered heavy losses; out of 30 vehicles of the 118th separate tank battalion, less than half reached the opposite bank. During the day of stubborn attacks on the positions of the 399th Infantry Regiment of Colonel Grizbakh, Krasnov's division captured only small sections of the first defensive line and slightly expanded the Nevsky bridgehead. The fighting took on a protracted character.

The left-flank 86th Rifle Division under the command of the Hero of the Soviet Union, Colonel V.A. Trubachev, advancing on Shlisselburg, the Germans met her with heavy artillery fire, mortars and machine guns. Crossing the Neva north of Marya, but the regiments of the first echelon lay on the ice, not reaching the left bank and suffering significant losses.

268th Infantry Division under the command of Colonel S.N. Borshchev, who replaced Major General S.I. Donskova, successfully crossed the Neva with all regiments and attacked the positions of the 391st Infantry Regiment. By the end of the day, the Soviet units advanced 3 km north of the 2nd Gorodok, but they did not succeed in encircling and destroying the enemy in the Gorodok node of resistance.

The greatest success on the first day was achieved by the 136th Rifle Division, commanded by Major General N.P. Simonyak. With a swift and unified attack, its regiments reached the eastern bank of the river with relatively small losses and captured Maryino almost immediately. General Dukhanov attracted the bulk of the artillery from the army group to support parts of this division and handed over to it another tank battalion. By evening, General Simonyak captured a bridgehead 3 km along the front and in depth.

Army sappers began building ice crossings for medium and heavy tanks. Trubachev's division, on the orders of the commander, retreated to their original positions,

361

and by the end of the day she crossed the Neva at the site of the 136th Infantry Division so that, turning around from behind its left flank, in the morning to launch an offensive in the direction of Workers' Settlement No. 3.

During the fighting on January 12, the troops of the 67th Army captured 33 enemy soldiers and officers and lost about 3,000 people killed and wounded. The flank divisions suffered particularly heavy losses. In the area of the Nevsky "patch", the Germans dismantled the ramparts of Russian corpses at night in order to provide sectors of fire for their machine guns.

In the 2nd Shock Army of the Volkhov Front, the greatest successes were achieved by part of the 327th Rifle Division of Colonel N.A. Polyakov. They burst into the Kruglaya Roscha, pushing the "vaunted" 366th regiment of the 227th Infantry Division, which was still commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Wengler. Desperately resisting Germans knocked out about 50 Soviet KVs and "thirty-fours", another 15 vehicles sank in the swamp. To the right, the 256th Infantry Division of Colonel F.S. tried to overcome the system of icy ramparts. Fetisov, ensuring the success of a neighbor. Even further north, the 372nd division under the command of Colonel P.I. Radygina and the 98th Tank Brigade fought all day for Rabochy Settlement No. 8, which was defended by the 2nd Battalion of the 374th Grenadier Regiment under the command of Major Ziegler. Peat quarries, even in winter conditions, turned out to be completely impassable for tanks, which could not even turn around from marching order to combat.

By the end of the first day of the offensive, individual divisions of Romanovsky's army managed to advance 2-3 km. The distance between the 67th Army and the 2nd Shock Army was reduced to 8 km. General Lindemann hurriedly advanced to the area of Mustolovo, Rabochesky Settlement No. 6 and Sinyavino the nearest operational reserves - units of the 96th and 61st Infantry Divisions. Soviet aviation received the task of preventing the approach of German reserves, but failed to cope with this task.

362

On the morning of January 13, the fighting took on a particularly stubborn and fierce character. The enemy now provided not only fire resistance, but also, relying on the nodes of resistance, continuously counterattacked, trying to restore the lost position. As soon as the right-flank regiment of the 45th Guards Division tried to go on the offensive east of Moscow Dubrovka, it was attacked by two enemy battalions. After the regiment beat off the counterattack, the Germans soon repeated it, but from two directions and with a force of up to three infantry battalions. As a result, the guardsmen of General Krasnov repulsed all attacks, but they themselves did not advance a single step. The second day of fighting and the 86th Infantry Division did not bring the desired results.

The 286th Rifle Division resumed its offensive and by 1500 moved forward 1.5-2 km, but at that moment the Germans, having thrown into battle the battalions of the 96th Infantry Division of General Neldehen, a battery of 88-mm anti-aircraft guns and a dozen tanks, hit her on the flank from the 2nd Gorodok area and forced her to retreat to her original positions. Here, the T-MU tanks from the 1st company of the 502nd tank battalion, which debuted so unsuccessfully in September, were involved. This time they showed their best side: according to German data, four "tigers" knocked out 16 Soviet tanks, losing one vehicle in the process. The Soviet division lost about one and a half thousand people. The artillery attached to the division was unable to provide effective assistance in repulsing the counterattack, since its advanced observation posts still remained on the right bank of the Neva. The fire was directed at the squares, a lot of shells were used up, but the combat effect turned out to be very low, and only "thanks to the heroic efforts of several batteries, the German tanks did not break through to the crossings." (Due to the low level of organization of firing at specific targets, Soviet artillery, thanks to the hard labor of the "home front workers", was distinguished by a fantastic amount of expendable ammunition, hence, as a result, a constant lack of shells. As

363

F. Mellenthin, who had just arrived on the Eastern Front from Africa, noted: "They had cannons and shells, and they liked to use these shells ... However, Russian artillery also had shortcomings. For example, the inflexibility of fire plans was sometimes simply amazing.")

Only the 136th division again managed to "gnaw" another 3-4 km in a day in the direction of Workers' Settlement No. 5. In the evening, Army Commander-67 brought the 123rd rifle brigade into action to cover the left flank of General Simonyak. The 284th Rifle Regiment of the 86th Division, bypassing Shlisselburg from the south, reached Workers' Settlement No. 3.

As a result of two days of fighting, the troops of the 67th Army captured a bridgehead up to 10 km along the front and 7 km in depth. Almost all strongholds and centers of resistance remained in the hands of the enemy. Engineer troops energetically built ice crossings for heavy equipment. The right flank was discovered by the Germans and destroyed by artillery and mortar fire. They managed to finish the northern crossing, but it was immediately out of order: the first tank, violating the rules for crossing the river, broke it and sank itself. There remained the central crossing in the Maryino area, which went into operation on the night of February 14. By dawn, heavy and medium-sized vehicles of the 152nd Tank Brigade of Colonel P.I. crossed the Neva along it. Pinchuk. At the same time, General Dukhanov decided to strike from the side of Lake Ladoga with the forces of the 55th Infantry Brigade in the direction of Workers' Settlement No. 3 with the task of assisting units of the 86th Infantry Division surrounded by the enemy in Shlisselburg.

The Germans began to transfer units of the 5th Mountain Rifle Division to the breakthrough site.

Formations of the 2nd shock army were also subjected to fierce counterattacks. Particularly fierce fighting took place in the area of the village of Lipka, Workers' Settlements No. 7 and No. 8. In this situation, General Romanovsky brought into the battle in the direction of Workers' Settlement No. 5 the 18th Infantry Division, Major General M.N. Ovchinnikov and the 98th tank

364

brigade of lieutenant colonel E.G. Paikin, and to the south of the Kruglaya grove - the 71st division of Major General N.M. Zamirovsky.

The commander of the 12th ski brigade (its core was sailors from the North Sea), Lieutenant Colonel N.A. Sebov was given the task of advancing from the Bugrovsky lighthouse to the southern shore of Lake Ladoga, to Lipka and Rabochesky settlement No. 1. To do this, he had to overcome about 6 km of the open space of Ladoga and break through the enemy's fortifications and barriers on the Ladoga canals.

During the first two days of the offensive, the troops of the Volkhov Front broke through the enemy defenses on a 10-kilometer stretch from Lipki to Raitolovo, but did not capture a single stronghold. Every day, the Soviet troops participating in the operation lost more than 6 thousand people.

On January 14, the 67th and 2nd shock armies committed most of the forces of the second echelons to the battle, but they could not completely turn the tide in their favor. At the same time, the formations of the first echelon did not change, but simply condensed battle formations, shortened the offensive lines and continued the battle.

"The withdrawal of troops to their initial position," points out Yarkhunov, "was carried out in a disorganized manner, the camouflage was broken. These shortcomings led to the fact that the troops, even at their initial position, suffered significant losses and lost the necessary impact force before the attack began ... some commanders at the beginning of the battle let go of the control of the battle, stopped monitoring the situation and its changes *niyami* and did not give the troops any orders. This led to the fact that the troops acted independently, the control of the battle was disrupted, which, of course, apart from losses and failures, could not give anything significant.

The second-echelon formations were used unsuccessfully, in parts, on a wide front, they were poorly controlled and simply broke down in a bunch. So, on the right flank of the 67th Army, in the zone of the 45th Guards Division, the 13th Division, commanded by Colonel V.P. Yakutovich, and

365

then the 142nd Rifle Brigade of Colonel N.A. Koshchinko. They attacked on the front from the northern outskirts of Arbuzov to Moscow Dubrovka, but were not successful.

The 102nd Rifle Brigade of Lieutenant Colonel A.V. Baltuka had the task of bypassing the Gorodok Knot from the east and connecting with the left-flank regiment of the 13th division, but, met by heavy enemy fire, remained at the starting line. Parts of the 268th Rifle Division were trampling around on the spot. 123rd division of Colonel A.P. Ivanova with the 152nd tank brigade went on the offensive in the direction of Village No. 6. However, the interaction of infantry with tanks and artillery was not established, escort guns and artillery observers remained in the rear, heavy KVs were launched through the swamp, as a result, in a day battle managed to overcome one kilometer.

The main battles unfolded on the outskirts of Rabochiy stretcher No. 5, defended by the 374th Grenadier Regiment von Belov. Here, constantly attacking and repulsing counterattacks, Simonyak's division fought with the 61st Tank Brigade attached to it. The account of the territory recaptured from the enemy went to 'meters. The 123rd Rifle Brigade was on the defensive at the southern edge of the Lilia Grove, covering the left flank of the 136th DIVISION.

Two regiments of Trubachev's division tried to close the ring around Shlisselburg, but were laid in the snow by heavy fire on the outskirts of Workers' Settlement No. 3. Another regiment was marking time at Preobrazhenskaya Gora, which covered the approaches to the city from the southwest.

The 2nd battalion of the 55th rifle brigade, advancing from the side of Lake Ladoga, by 10 o'clock overcame the enemy's barriers on the southern coast and reached the Staro-Ladoga Canal. However, he did not receive support, was surrounded by the Germans and broke back on the night of January 15. The troops of the 2nd Shock Army, together with the second-echelon formations brought into battle, a total of 9 divisions and 3 tank brigades, fought at the turn of Workers' Settlement No. 7,

366

Sticky, slightly moving forward. Ziegler's battalion continued to hold out in Workers' Settlement No. 8 in complete encirclement.

On January 15, the 67th Army advanced only in the main direction with the forces of the 136th Rifle Division and the 123rd Rifle Brigade. There was no promotion anywhere. The remaining formations of the army repelled enemy counterattacks and consolidated on occupied lines. The Germans, having pulled up two regimental groups of the 61st Infantry Division of General Huner from the Pogostye region overnight, brought them into battle in the area of Sinyavino and Poselok No. 5 in the morning. A precarious balance arose in the area of the breakthrough. Meretskov and Romanovsky, in turn, threw the 239th Infantry Division of Major General P.N. Chernyshev from the reserve of the front, the 11th division of Colonel E.I. Marchenko, two ski and one tank brigades.

Near Shlisselburg, the commander of the 330th regiment of the 86th rifle division, Colonel G.I. The middle was enlightened, and he made a "bold and very reasonable decision": to bypass the enemy's stronghold on Preobrazhenskaya Gora from the east and hit the Germans in the flank and rear. Why the decision was reasonable is understandable, a smart one will not go uphill, especially if the mountain is studded with firing points, the embrasures of which look exactly to the west. But the colonel needed courage to show the most punishable quality in the "system" - initiative. After all, the authorities ordered not to bypass, but to "take possession". Already by noon on January 15, Seredin's regiment occupied both the mountain and the southwestern outskirts of the city.

The next day, the strike group of the 67th Army broke into Workers' Settlement No. 5 from the west, but couldn't take it.

On the front of the 2nd shock army, Fetisov's 256th division made a breakthrough, breaking the enemy's resistance south of the village, broke through the second defensive line and captured the Podgornaya railway station. Now

367

The fronts were separated by no more than 2 km. The German units located in the areas of Shlisselburg, Lipka and in the forests south of Lake Ladoga were under the threat of encirclement and destruction. In this regard, the retention of workers' settlements No. 5 and No. 1, through which the only road to Mgu passed from north to south, acquired special importance for them. Parts of the 96th and 61st Infantry Divisions held the defense here. Major Ziegler's battalion, left without ammunition and food, secretly left Workers' Settlement No. 8 at night and slipped unnoticed through the Soviet Kolykha to the south. . For three days, fighting for every building, the city was stormed by the 330th regiment, and the 34th ski brigade of Lieutenant Colonel Ya.F. Potekhin was advancing at that time along the narrow gauge railway with the aim of cutting off the escape routes of the German garrison in a southeasterly direction. The difficulty here was that the road was fortified with numerous pillboxes, and the Potekhin brigade, recently formed from eighteen-year-old Leningrad youths and thrown into battle for the first time, had only 45-mm guns and 82-mm guns to suppress the firing points.

mortars.

At dawn on the sixth day of the operation, units of the 372nd Rifle Division and the 122nd Tank Brigade approached Rabochey Settlement No. 1 and the narrow-gauge railway to the south of it. The 18th Division and the 98th Tank Brigade approached Workers' Settlement No. 5, which was under continuous fire from more than 500 guns and mortars. The 128th division on that day broke the enemy resistance in Lipki. Success here was facilitated by the detour maneuver of the 12th Ski Brigade.

By the end of January 17, the troops of the Volkhov Front captured Workers' Settlement No. 4 and Sinyavino Station. The corridor separating the troops of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts became quite narrow, less than one kilometer. But this last kilometer proved to be the most difficult. The battle took on an exceptionally fierce character. General

368

Huner kept the neck to the last, ensuring the exit of the German units from the Ladoga "bottle" to the south, to the Sinyavinsky Heights.

Finally, at 09:30 on January 18, 1943, the 123rd Rifle Brigade of the Leningrad Front, after a decisive attack, captured Workers' Settlement No. 1, and its first battalion met with the first battalion of the 1240th Regiment of the 372nd Rifle Division of the Volkhov Front. At this time, units of the 136th division bypassed Workers' Settlement No. 5 from the south and north. And here at 11.45 there was a meeting of the soldiers of the 269th regiment of the 136th division with the advanced units of the 424th rifle regiment of the 18th rifle division.

Subdivisions of the 34th ski brigade, having beaten off several enemy counterattacks from the southeastern outskirts of Shlisselburg, reached the Staro-Ladoga Canal by 10 o'clock. Turning their front to the west, they blocked all exits for the enemy troops remaining in the city. In the afternoon, in the village of Lipki, the reconnaissance skiers met with soldiers of the 128th Infantry Division and the 12th Ski Brigade of the Volkhov Front.

Battalions of the 330th Infantry Regiment of the 86th Division and armored cars from the 61st Tank Brigade liberated Shlisselburg by 4 p.m. By the end of the day, the entire southern coast of Lake Ladoga, 8 to 11 km wide, was cleared of German troops. True, a significant part of the enemy grouping (approximately 8,000 soldiers and officers), abandoning heavy weapons, managed to escape from the bag to a new defensive line, hastily created north of Sinyavino and along the line

Moika river. This line has already been occupied by the 2nd regiment of the SS police division, the rangers of the 5th mountain rifle division and the regiments of the 1st infantry division deployed to the north. The 28th Chasseur was on the way. The 21st and 11th Infantry Divisions arrived in the area of Mga and Sinyavino. According to Soviet data, the Germans lost more than 13,000 people killed and 1,261 captured in the Shlisselburg-Sinyavino ledge. Our trophies amounted to 222 guns, 178 mortars, 512 machine guns, 9 armored vehicles, 2 tanks.

369

Including one of the "tigers", which was captured in the area of Rabochey Settlement No. 5 by soldiers of the 18th Infantry Division and transported to Moscow for detailed study.

As GC recalls. Zhukov, who received the highest military rank for Iskra: "In the course of the operation, the observation post of the commander of the 2nd shock army, where we were, moved to the area of settlement No. 1. I saw with what joy they rushed towards each other soldiers of the fronts that broke through the blockade. In general, according to the marshal, the entire operation from the moment it began until the moment of the breakthrough, he was at the command post of General Romanovsky. Under his personal control and almost with personal participation, the most valuable trophy was pulled out from the neutral zone - the "experimental model of the new heavy tank" Tiger "No.

But here's what's interesting. It is always a pleasure to write about one's victories, and many Soviet generals left memoirs about the operation. That's just Georgy Konstantinovich, as that Krylov's elephant, none of them "noted".

General Kalashnikov, head of the political department of the Volkhov Front, recalls: "On the evening of January 17, K.A. Meretskov, I.I. Fedyuninsky, V.Z. Romanovsky, L.3. Mehlis. I was there too. The details of the meeting with the troops of the Leningrad Front were clarified. It is strange that he did not notice Zhukov. Meretskov did not remember anything about Zhukov's participation either. To all appearances, neither the deputy front commander, General Fedyuninsky, had ever seen Zhukov, although he did not fail to note that on the evening of January 17, "I was sitting in the dugout of Lieutenant General V.3. Romanovsky", nor the chief engineer of the front, General Khrenov. All the heroes of the breakthrough fit in that dugout, except for the Deputy Supreme Commander. On the other hand, on the Leningrad Front, Voroshilov is much and willingly remembered: he taught

370

fighters to quit smoking, checked the Neva ice for the passage of tanks, calmly stood under shelling, waited until the explosion killed the "colonel who was standing nearby", attended the exercises and petitioned Govorov for the issuance of an additional portion of vodka to the Red Army soldiers.

A riddle can only have one solution. It follows from this: either all the Volkhov generals and the marshal deliberately keep silent about the contribution of the "greatest" but disgraced commander to the lifting of the blockade, which also characterizes them in a certain way. Either Zhukov was not at the command post of Romanovsky, he added, and this is quite probable, given the habit of Georgy Konstantinovich to personally attribute to himself all the victories of the anti-Hitler coalition in World War II.

Around midnight on January 18, an official message was transmitted that the blockade of Leningrad had been broken. The same number G.K. Zhukov was awarded the title of Marshal of the Soviet Union, followed by the awarding of the Order of Suvorov | degree No. 1. Orders of Suvorov were received by General of the Army Meretskov and Colonel General (since January 15) Govorov. The Order of Kutuzov [degree was awarded to Lieutenant General I.I. Fedyuninsky and V.3. Romanovsky, Major General M.P. Dukhanov. Comrade Stalin has not yet thought of celebrating victories with salutes. The 136th and 327th Rifle Divisions, which distinguished themselves in battles, were transformed into the 63rd and 64th Guards, and the 61st Separate Tank Brigade became the 30th Guards.

At this point, Zhukov and Meretskov abruptly cut off their memories, although the Iskra operation was still in full swing and continued until the end of January. After all, its goals have not yet been achieved.

How then "to turn south and by the end of January to reach the line ...>?

But no way. Nothing happened, so our order-bearers are not interested in remembering further.

371

On January 19, units of the 16th fortified region and the 125th separate machine gun and artillery battalion were transferred to the troops of the 67th Army to secure the liberated area. They received the task, in case of possible attempts by the enemy to restore the blockade, to create five battalion centers of resistance, to prepare a line for defense: the northern outskirts of the 2nd Gorodok - Workers' settlement No. 5. To the east, similar events were carried out by the Volkhov Front. At the same time, supply bases were transferred closer to the front line, a road net.

The troops of Dukhanov and Romanovsky were to regroup within 24 hours, turn south and develop an offensive against Mustolovo, Sinyavino, and the village of Mikhailovsky in order to defeat the enemy's operational reserves and reach the Moika River. In the future, it was necessary to occupy the Mga station, clear the Kirov railway of the enemy, and firmly occupy the Voronovo-Sigalovo-Voitolovo-Voskresensk line.

On the new front from the Neva to the "Wengler's Nose", General Lindemann brought into battle parts of nine divisions - 61, 170, 227, 96, 223, 1st Infantry, 5th Mountain Rifle, 28th Jaeger, SS Police Division and a battalion of Spaniards. True, the number of their regiments was reduced to the size of battalions, the losses in the officer corps were especially great. -

The Soviet offensive resumed on January 20 at 10.30 am after 10 minutes of artillery preparation. The 67th Army, with the forces of the 46th and 123rd rifle divisions, the 102nd, 123rd, 138th and 142nd rifle divisions, the 152nd and 220th tank brigades, delivered the main blow to Mustolovo with the immediate task of capturing the Gorodok resistance node, Arbuzovo, Workers' settlement No. 6. All attacks choked under enemy fire. Only in the center did the 123rd rifle division, the 142nd and 138th brigades overcome the northern part of the Sinyavinsky peat extraction and advanced 2 km. The 2nd shock army with the forces of the 147th, 239th rifle divisions and the 16th tank brigade only managed to occupy the Settlement

372

No. 6 on his right flank and organize a solid defense in it.

General Yuvorov decided to throw all the reserves of the Leningrad Front into battle and ordered to transfer to the 67th Army the 224th, 142nd, 90th and 189th rifle divisions, the 250th and 56th rifle brigades, the 1st Krasnozn - change tank brigade. At the same time, the 45th and 63rd Guards and 268th Rifle Divisions were withdrawn for replenishment. (Once again, about whether Leningrad could have waited until the army had qualitatively prepared and completed the deblockade operation. Former company commander I.M. Dushenov states the following: "After the breakthrough, we were given a lot of bread: 900 g of black and 300 g of white. We gave up in favor of the Leningrad children. They began to feed us well anyway: cabbage soup, buckwheat and rice porridge, American stewed meat ...>)

In fact, Dukhanov received a new army and the old task - to break through the German defenses on the Mga River and defeat the Mgin group. However, fresh formations were located 30-80 km from the combat area and could enter the battle no earlier than the 25th. Therefore, from January 21 to 24, the 67th Army continued its attempts to advance as part of four rifle brigades and two rifle divisions.

Finally, General Dukhanov decided to bring the 11th and 55th rifle brigades into action, as well as to form an army mobile group consisting of the 220th tank and 34th ski brigades.

According to the plan of the army commander, rifle formations were supposed to break through the enemy defenses and ensure the introduction of a mobile group into battle, which was to capture Mustolovo with a swift blow along the road from Workers' Village No. 6 and cut off the retreat of the entire Gorodok grouping. However, on January 25, units of the 11th and 55th brigades were unable to break through anything, and, accordingly, the raid of the strike group did not take place. Until the end of the month, the 224th Rifle Division and the 46th Tank Regiment were thrown into the battle consistently and without results.

373

Formations of the shock group of the Volkhov Front - 18, 256, 379, 239, 364, 191, 147, 80, 71st rifle divisions, 33rd rifle, 11th ski, 16th tank brigades - together and separately, changing and mixing with each other until complete loss of control, storming the Sinyavino Heights, the same Rosh "Round" and the Rosh "Kvadratnaya" near Workers' Village No. 6, "due to heavy enemy fire, they did not advance and fought on the same lines". True, the "square" grove was seized by the end of the month.

The enemy transferred the 11th and 21st infantry divisions near Sinyavino, exposing the rest of the front to the limit: from Novgorod to Pogost, near Leningrad and Oranienbaum, Lindemann had 14 infantry divisions left. But the risk paid off. The Soviet troops were firmly bogged down in the German defense at the line north and east of the 2nd Orodok, south of Workers' Settlement No. 6, north of Sinyavino, west of Ontovoy Lipka and east of Gaitolovo. In addition, they continued to hold a foothold on the left bank of the Neva in the area of Moscow Dubrovka.

On this operation "Spark" is considered completed.

In the course of it, no significant military successes were achieved. Troops of the 67th Army of the Leningrad and 2nd Shock Volkhov fronts managed to advance 6–9 km and break through a land corridor 8 to 11 km wide along the shore of Lake Ladoga. It was not possible to clear the Kirov highway from the enemy. For each kilometer recaptured from the enemy, a full-blooded division was paid. The 8th army of Starikov could not take a step. Soviet losses for nineteen days amounted to more than 115 thousand people killed and wounded, 417 guns and mortars, 41 tanks (according to German data, 225) and 41 aircraft.

But the breakthrough of the blockade was of great political and symbolic significance. The battle for Workers' Settlement No. 5, in contrast to the lost battle of Luban, entered the category of strategic operations of the Red Army.

374

On January 18, as soon as Headquarters received information about the breaking of the blockade, the GKO instructed to stop the construction of a pile-ice railway line across Lake Ladoga and direct all forces and funds to the construction of a new railway from Polyany to Shlisselburg and a temporary pile bridge across the Neva at Shlisselburg. The 35 km long railway line, called the Victory Road, was laid by military builders through peat bogs in 18 days. To save time, earth embankments were not erected, the sleepers were laid in compacted snow. At 10 am on February 7, at the platform of the Finlyandsky railway station, Leningraders solemnly welcomed the first train that came from the mainland and delivered 800 tons of butter. Two weeks later, food supply norms established for the largest industrial centers of the country began to operate in Leningrad: workers began to receive 700-600 grams of bread a day, employees - 500, children and dependents - 400 grams. The supply rates for other types of food have increased.

However, the narrow corridor was shot through by German artillery and did not ensure regular supply of the fortified city, the path passed 4–5 km from the front line: "The trains had to be driven under bombing and artillery fire. Fragments overtook and machinists, and stokers, and conductors. Repair of tracks was often done with improvised means on a live thread. With the onset of summer, the trains, contrary to all existing rules and ideas, moved along the hub in the water. As a result of shelling and bombing, railway communication

was often violated, and with the onset of ice drift, the bridge across the Neva ceased to function. The main cargo flows continued to go along the Road of Life through Ladoga; By March 30, more than 214,000 tons of cargo had been delivered to Leningrad through it.

In addition, there was a threat that the Germans would be able to restore the situation. It was not necessary for the population to know about this, but the military understood everything perfectly. And nako

375

Well, if the blockade was really broken, then why do we keep talking and writing about "900 days and nights"?

"The military operations of the Volkhov Front in 1943," writes Meretskov, "after the Leningrad blockade was broken, took place under conditions that were perhaps the most difficult of all that fell to the lot of its soldiers. From the end of January to December of this year, our troops, maintaining in most cases the superiority on the right wing of the front, in the area of Gaitolovo, Mishkino, Voronovo, carried out a series of local operations with the tasks, firstly, to make the southern wall impenetrable the corridor that now connected Leningrad and the Volkhov region; secondly, to expand the corridor in order to strengthen the connection with Leningrad and the Baltic, make it more reliable, better supply them and prepare for subsequent offensive actions ... And for almost twelve months, two fighting neighbors, both of our fronts, were fading, then flaring up hostilities in the direction of the Mga station. At the same time, we carried out auxiliary operations in some areas." Thus, the year 1943 became a year of continuous attacks for the soldiers of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts. True, the marshal, as always, is modest: the operations were not at all local and not auxiliary, but quite the contrary. Another thing is what came out of it.

Chapter 12

CONTINUATION OF OPERATION "ISKRA" (February - April 1943)

When at the end of January it became obvious that the efforts of the Soviet troops to break through the enemy's defensive zone only with strikes from the north were unsuccessful, the Headquarters came up with the idea of inflicting flank strikes and reaching the rear of the German grouping in the area of Mga, Mustolovo, Sinyavino with the forces of five six divisions of the 55th Army of the Leningrad Front from the area of Krasny Bor, Ivanovskoye in the direction of Mga and by the forces of six divisions of the 54th Army of Volkhovskiy from the "Pogostya bag" in the direction of Vaskina Niva, Shapka. At the same time, the troops of other armies continued their offensive against Moscow State University from the north.

According to its goals and tasks, it was still the same Iskra, according to official history - a series of unrelated army operations, according to the memoirs of Soviet marshals-generals - and there was no operation at all. So, fights of local importance. In fact, the tasks assigned to the Volkhov and Leningrad fronts were part of the strategic plan, which had the goal of defeating the entire Army Group North, liberating the Leningrad Region and creating prerequisites for entering the Baltic. More than 400 thousand soldiers of the North-Western Front and a specially created Special Group under the command of the unsinkable General M.S. will take part in the planned offensive. Khozina - 1st Panzer, 68th Combined Arms Army and Reserve Group - which

377

played the main role. After breaking through the German defenses south of Lake Ilmen, the Special Group was supposed to strike in a northwestern direction, go to the area of Porkhov, Dno, Struga Krasnye, cut the communications of Army Group Sever, liberate Pskov and, together with the 27th Army strike at Luga. The troops of the right wing of the North-Western Front, after capturing Staraya Russa, were to take Novgorod in cooperation with the 52nd Army of the Volkhov Front. Khozin's group was ordered at that time to capture the area of Kingisepp, Narva and cut off the paths

retreat of the enemy, leading to Estonia. After that, it remained to "destroy the Volkhov and Leningrad groups" and collect trophies.

The operation to encircle the Mgin-sk-Sinyavino group began on February 10th.

From Kolpino in the direction of Tosno, after a two-hour artillery barrage, with the support of the 1st Red Banner Tank Brigade, the 31st and 46th tank regiments, the 72nd, 43rd Rifle and 63rd Guards divisions of the 55th Army of the Leningrad Front attacked. They were met by units of the 250th Spanish division under the command of General Esteban Infantes. According to Karel, the Spaniards on a 30-kilometer stretch had: the 260th infantry regiment of 2,500 people, as well as three battalions with a total number of about 2,000 people, several special-purpose units, 24 guns and not a single tank; the Russians had 33,000 men, 60 tanks, up to 1,000 guns. In three days of fighting, Soviet troops managed to break through the enemy defenses, advance 4 km along the Moscow railway and capture the settlements of Krasny Bor, Staraya Myza, Chernyshevo and the Popovka station.

At the point of impact were the guards of General Simonyak. As I.M. Duschinsky:

"Comdivid N.P. Simonyak said: "Brothers, we will defeat the Spaniards! Whoever stays alive will all be Heroes of the Soviet Union."

378

We flew at them like kites, and three hours later Krasny Bor was ours. For my company, this operation turned out to be the most successful... They wanted to reward us, but they canceled it. As the commander of the 55th Army, V.P. Sviridov, the capture of Krasny Bor was an operation of local importance. Only a few received soldier's medals. Parts of the 14th fortified region were entrenched in the captured positions.

Immediately, a mobile group was introduced into the breakthrough under the leadership of the Deputy Commander, Major General I.M. Lyubovtseva. The group had the task of capturing Ulyanovsk with a strike along the line of the Oktyabrskaya railway. However, the 222nd tank and 34th ski brigades, which were part of the group, did not manage to build on the success. Reason: "Because of the sudden thaw, the tankers could not operate off-road, and the skiers turned into ordinary infantrymen (?)." The weather, of course, did not interfere with the enemy. In addition, even in the opinion of the Aryans, who usually treated their allies with arrogance, the Spaniards fought heroically: "The Spaniards fought steadfastly with daggers, shovels and hand grenades. Their exceptional valor deserves the memory of posterity." The Blue Division lost 3,200 men, but held out until the 212th Infantry Division of General Reiman, hastily transferred from the Chudovo area, approached. The Germans counterattacked and pushed the Soviet units back. Borshchev's 268th Rifle Division, brought into the battle, was unable to turn the tide. On the left flank of the army, the 43rd Infantry Division of Colonel Ya.P. Sinkevich and the 34th ski brigade of Lieutenant Colonel Ya.F. Potekhin, pushing the enemy 3-4 km, went to the river bank.

The result of two weeks of fighting was the liberation of Krasny Bor by the troops of the Lenfront, but the breakthrough to Tosno failed. The Germans estimated Soviet losses at 11,000 killed.

General Sviridov shifted his efforts to his left flank and on February 23 made an attempt to develop an offensive from the Ivanovo bridgehead. According to the plan, a blow from the "patch" to a hundred

379

the crown of Ulyanivka, Tosno was inflicted by the 43rd Infantry Division. At the same time, the 56th separate brigade formed from the sailors of Kronstadt, numbering 4800 people under the command of M.D. Papchenko. The sailors broke into the German trenches, seized the mast impregnation plant and the church. |

The already familiar enemy, reorganized into the 4th SS Panzergrenadier Police Division, and units of the 2nd SS Infantry Brigade put up strong resistance. The fierce battle, which lasted one day, ended in the death of the landing force. Under deadly fire, the 43rd Rifle Division did not rise to the attack.

Until January 1944, the positions of the parties did not change here.

The 54th Army advancing from Smerdyn (115th, 177th, 198th, 281st, 294th, 311th Rifle Divisions, 140th Rifle, 124th Tank Brigade, 6th Marine Brigade), attacking the 217th infantry division at a front of 5 km, began to push the Germans, but suddenly ran into the 96th infantry division, transferred here from the Sinyavino direction for rest and replenishment. Together with units of the 61st and 132nd Infantry Divisions, the regiments of General Neldehen took part in repelling the Soviet attack. The advance of Sukhomlin's army in February was 3-4 km. Meretskov, in his habit of turning his own defeats into victories, assures that the 54th Army "has completed its task", it turns out that it "managed to divert the fascist troops intended for a breakthrough to Shlisselburg". During the "distraction", the front commander himself, in company with Kliment Efremovich, who, as usual, dragged everyone to the front line, almost got captured by the Germans.

It must be said that the commander of Army Group North at that moment least of all thought about a breakthrough to Shlisselburg, since on February 15, south of Lake Ilmen, six combined arms and one tank army of the North-Western

380

front under the command of Marshal Timoshenko began an operation to defeat the 16th German Army and reach the rear of the 18th Army of Lindemann. The result of this offensive was the organized evacuation by the enemy of the "Demyansky bag", which he held for 17 months, and the establishment of a front line along the Lovat River. But that's all. The general strategic offensive in the northwestern direction failed. The special group of troops of General Khozin was disbanded.

It's funny how Meretskov, who considers his task "accomplished", evaluates the actions of Marshal Timoshenko: "... I draw the following conclusion: although by that time the Red Army had already achieved major successes, our military leaders still had something to learn in complex art of modern warfare.

On the northern face of the Sinyavino ledge, Dukhanov's 67th army, which went on the offensive on February 12, after five days of fierce fighting, managed to take the ruins of the 1st and 2nd Gorodoks and the 8th hydroelectric power station and advance 5 km south to the Arbuzovo area. Under the threat of encirclement, on February 17, the Germans left their positions in front of the Nevsky "piglet". The legendary and meaningless epic has ended. Hoping to break through the blockade, the Soviet troops held this bridgehead for about 400 days. It was plowed up by explosions of shells and mines. After the war, it was calculated that up to 12 kg of metal fell on each of its square meters. At each meter of the "piglet" 17 people died. And in total - about 250 thousand Soviet soldiers. This number is sufficient for manning 20-25 divisions, or 3-4 combined-arms armies. The bridgehead became a huge mass grave, without playing any operational role.

In the east, in the zone of the 4th Army of the Volkhov Front, an attempt was again made to throw the Germans from the Kirishi bridgehead. Having toiled with the Vysokaya grove, military engineers remembered the experience of the Crimean War and decided to dig under it. Two teams of sappers of the 44th division, observing the strictest secrecy measures, began to lead the mine gallery at the end of November 1942.

381

After driving 180 meters underground, an explosion chamber was set up at the end of the gallery, more than 30 tons of explosives were placed, and explosive nets were mounted. At 7 am on February 23, the grove

"High" and the German stronghold located in it flew into the air. The Soviet assault battalion, with one throw, without meeting resistance, took up a new position, but that was all. Further advance was halted by enemy counterattacks.

On February 27, People's Commissar of Defense Comrade Stalin pointed out to Zhukov and Voroshilov that the main reason for the failure was that the 67th and 2nd shock armies "acted separately and each undertook to break through the enemy's fire system in its sector, which led to the dispersal of forces and means, to aimless great sacrifices in manpower and technology. Marshal Zhukov, whose task was precisely to coordinate the actions of the Volkhovites and Leningraders, remembered absolutely nothing about his participation in the February breakthrough. His reflections during this period are devoted to the drinking of the Battle of Stalingrad, in which Georgy Konstantinovich did not take part, and smoothly flow to the Kursk salient.

The directive of the Headquarters ordered the offensive to be temporarily stopped, the 2nd shock army, in order to centralize control, be transferred to the Leningrad Front, the elimination of the Sinyavin "sore" was entrusted to General Govorov, and the representation to Marshal Voroshilov. True, exactly one week later, Stalin changed his mind and ordered the return of Romanovsky's army back.

In early March, the fighting subsided briefly.

A new offensive operation was immediately conceived to defeat the Mgin-sk-Sinyavinskaya grouping of the 18th Army by delivering deeper flank attacks. The Volkhov Front was tasked with breaking through the enemy defenses on the Voronovo and Lodva fronts and, developing a strike south of Mga, linking up with the troops of the Leningrad Front in the Vaitolovo area. Govorov's troops were obliged to break through the German positions at Red

382

Bora, take possession of Ulyanovka and Sablino with subsequent advance to Vaitolovo and, in cooperation with Merepkov's troops, "destroy or capture" the enemy grouping. On the "Sinyavino front", the 2nd shock and 67th armies were ordered to temporarily go on the defensive.

The start of the operation was scheduled for March 14, 1943, and they planned to complete it no later than March 25. The organization of interaction between the fronts and the coordination of their actions were entrusted to Marshal Voroshilov.

To accomplish the assigned task, the commander of the Volkhov Front singled out the 8th Army, consisting of ten rifle divisions, two rifle and two tank brigades, and all the reinforcement artillery that the front had at its disposal. In his reserve, Meretskov left one rifle division and two rifle brigades.

Commander-8 built the troops of the shock group in two echelons. The first had five rifle divisions (286, 256, 378, 374 and 265th), four tank regiments (35th, 25th, 33rd, 50th) and all reinforcement artillery. In the second - three rifle divisions (239th, 364th and 64th guards) and two tank brigades (122nd and 185th). To the north of the planned breakthrough area, from Voronovo to Gaitolovo, the positions of the 372nd Rifle Division and the 58th Rifle Brigade were occupied. Regiments of the 223rd Infantry and 285th Security DIVISIONS defended in front of the front of the army of General Starikov in the breakthrough sector.

From Krasny Bor, the 55th army was supposed to attack the enemy, which had in two operational echelons the 72nd, 291st, 123rd, 131st, 46th, 189th, 224th, 13th, 268th rifle divisions, Rifle, 222, 152, 220, 30th Guards Tank Brigades and 31st Breakthrough Tank Regiment!

Difficulties in organizing the delivery of troops, ammunition and materiel in the conditions of the beginning of spring forced them to postpone the start of the offensive to March 19th.

The offensive of the 8th Army began with artillery preparation lasting 2 hours and 15 minutes. In three days, the troops managed to break through the front line of the enemy's defense on the front of 7 km and move forward from

383

3 to 4 km. A mobile detachment consisting of the 191st Guards Rifle Regiment of the 64th Guards Division and a tank battalion of the 122nd Tank Brigade under the command of Major Rudko broke through to the Mga-Kirishi railway, but was cut off. The Germans, having transferred the 1st, 21st and 121st Infantry Divisions to the breakthrough site, continuously counterattacked, and the fighting took on a protracted character.

"For March 21, despite the introduction of two fresh divisions to develop a breakthrough, units of the 8th Army did not advance on the day of the battle," Voroshilov reported. - Lrichins - fire resistance of the enemy, and most importantly - poor organization of command and control. On March 20, two divisions of the second echelon were introduced through the battle formations of the troops of the first echelon. The entry of these divisions was not actually organized, and due to the lack of a clear leadership, the troops in the forest mixed up with each other, control was lost.

The true situation was established by the army command only by the evening of March 21, having previously received progress reports from the divisions indicating points that were not actually occupied. The entire rest of the day of March 21 and the night of March 22 were spent on putting the confused troops in order.

On April 1, Meretskov brought into battle from the reserve the 14th Rifle Division and the 1st Separate Rifle Brigade, which, together with the 64th Guards Division, were to seize the Karbusel node of enemy resistance and thereby create conditions for the development of the offensive of the entire strike force of the army. . However, the increased resistance of the enemy, who transferred the 69th, 121st, 21st Infantry and 5th Mountain Rifle Divisions, could not be overcome. A day later, the offensive of the 8th army finally choked.

The army of Leningraders, advancing on the signal "Hurricane" 3-4 km in the direction of Ulyanovsk, was stopped by the 4th SS division, the legion "Netherlands", a company of "tigers" and transferred by trucks directly to the battlefield 5- and mountain rifle division. Then units of the 58th, 170th and 254th Infantry Divisions approached. Of the 500 who took the fight.

384

The Flemings survived 45 people, but Sablino and Ulyanovsk turned out to be unattainable. "Losses on the Russian side were even more horrendous," says P. Karel. - In the second battle on Lake Ladoga, rivers of blood were shed. The peat bog near Sinyavino, the forests near Kolpino and Krasny Bor were one terrible battlefield.

On March 30, General Govorov reported that he had achieved significant results: firstly, he thwarted the impending German strike in the Kolpino direction (?), and secondly, he was once again convinced "of the exceptional importance of the Ulyanovsk knot in the enemy's defense system" (!), - and asked permission to stop the attacks due to the rapidly running out of shells, soldiers and the general condition of the troops. Six divisions of the 55th Army needed "to be completed and put in order" in order to continue hostilities.

Voroshilov in a report to the Supreme from | April reported in plain text: of the nine divisions allocated by the Leningrad Front, three remained. According to the representative of the Stavka, the operation should have been curtailed and the troops should have been given at least a month to put themselves in order, to accumulate ammunition and train reinforcements in elementary offensive operations: "We need to teach at least individual battalions how to act in the forest."

Stalin agreed. On April 4, the armies were ordered to gain a foothold on the achieved lines and prepare a heavily echeloned defense, which, as stated, "allowed the 8th Army

successfully repel the repeated attacks of superior enemy forces (?!), which followed since April 11, including the 5th mountain rifle and 69th infantry divisions. General Starikov had nothing at all: 11 rifle, 1 artillery, 2 anti-aircraft divisions, 3 rifle and 2 tank brigades, 4 tank, 15 artillery and mortar regiments.

Our modern statistical studies give Soviet losses only for Operation Iskra, which is considered completed on January 30, 1943. "Army"

385

they do not take into account the operations of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts. From Voroshilov's report, one can only learn "that the losses in people on both fronts are very high", the consumption of ammunition, in comparison with the successes achieved, is large, the losses in tanks are significant", and all this "the result is not only and, in my opinion, , not so much because the enemy is strong, but because we are not well prepared for this operation.

German military historians quite reasonably believe that in the period from January 12 to April 4, three phases of the Second Battle of Ladoga unfolded around Mga, during which the losses of two Soviet fronts amounted to 270 thousand people, 847 tanks and 693 aircraft. If we estimate the consumption of fighters in Iskra - 6,000 people a day, then this is approximately how it goes.

In April, there was a temporary lull. "Cunning Yaroslaven" immediately set about drawing up a new plan to defeat the enemy's Mginско-Sinyavinskaya grouping. Assuring Stalin that the enemy "is systematically preparing for the assault on Leningrad" and only active actions. On the Volkhov Front, this assault is being "thwarted", Merekkov asked for more tanks, more shells and reinforcements, reinforcements, reinforcements. The general received reinforcements, and instead of tanks, he was ordered to improve the defense. By a directive of April 16, the 2nd Shock Army was withdrawn from the Volkhov Front and transferred to the Leningrad Front. In early May, the 52nd Army went to the Stavka reserve. Instead of Voroshilov, Marshal S.K. was appointed representative of the Headquarters. Timoshenko. For the failure of a strategic breakthrough into the Baltic states, which cost the loss of more than 100 thousand soldiers and commanders of the North-Western Front, the marshal was transferred to the "coordinators" before the horse of the war.

Both opposing sides waited out the slush, improved their defenses, and Meretskov "thought more and more" over the plans for the summer campaign. And as soon as the commander began to think, and in this matter the main thing is to start, not God knows what original,

386

but in some places quite sensible thoughts: "What is needed in order to forestall an enemy attack on our troops near Ladoga? In time to launch a counterattack (he had not yet thought of a deliberate defense, this was beyond the scope of our doctrine). And what needs to be done to prepare our offensive? Weaken enemy defenses. And how to divert his attention from the left flank of the front, if the operation will have to be carried out there? Of course, draw attention to the right flank. And how do the Volkhovites pull back Nazi divisions from other fronts? Only by destroying their formations on our front. Finally, how to achieve all this while maintaining our troops? Switch to the massive use of our artillery and aircraft.

So, by the method of logical analysis, after fighting for two years, Army General Meretskov thought of the massive and systematic use of fire weapons in order to wear down the enemy in the course of a positional struggle. The idea took shape in the plan "Long-term artillery and aviation offensive in the conditions of our own and enemy stable defense." Or simply - "mill".

The political worker Kalashnikov assures that the Volkhov Front, while continuously inflicting considerable damage on the enemy, had no losses itself, "since the artillery operated mainly from concealed positions." However, this statement does not fit in with the task that the political departments of the formations persistently solved under his leadership: "The indefatigable education in people of an offensive

impulse." This meant that the Soviet command still adhered to the principle of active defense, only now there was much more artillery, and there was no need to save money on shells and bombs. According to Meretskov, in some sectors of the front, massive fire training was carried out according to the full scheme with the transfer of fire, imitating the beginning of an offensive, in others, fighters were sent to attack without any fire training so that the "combat tone" did not decrease. Although the commander also believes that people

387

His losses were "insignificant", nevertheless, the Volkhov and Leningrad fronts lost an average of up to 2000 people per day in killed and wounded. But in general, these are normal combat everyday life of the front, which has learned to organize defense.

"Mill" worked from mid-May to early July. How many Germans were "ground" in this way is unknown, according to Meretskov, "thousands of soldiers and officers". How many shells were used up is not reported, but even without Meretskov it is clear that a lot. On the other hand, it is absolutely certain that the Wehrmacht generals were not so dumb as to unravel Meretskov's trick only after a month and a half: fire raids. And we, in response, stopped the operation, believing that it had already played its role. I think it was the other way around. Few have mastered the art of "withdrawing their troops" from the first day of the war and quite often used this technique. Most likely, in early July, our command guessed this and stopped throwing out combat

`supplies down the drain.

In parallel, a new offensive operation on two fronts was being prepared.

Baltic Fleet in 1943

The German naval command, taking into account the lessons of 1942, took measures to prepare for the further strengthening of anti-submarine lines, setting the goal of "hermetically" blocking the Gulf of Finland with the beginning of spring. In April, the enemy placed double anti-submarine nets up to 60 meters deep and about 30 miles along the front between the island of Nargen and Porkaala. The network fence was supplemented by mine banks. Already existing minefields were significantly compacted. To ensure the stability of anti-submarine networks in bad weather, they were not deepened to the very bottom, but

388

the formed bottom gap was covered with 200 bottom mines, which excluded the passage of submarines under the net.

All work was completed by May 9th. A total of 9,834 mines and 1,244 mine defenders were delivered. At the same time, the Germans and Finns made several active minelayings on the Seskar reach, near the island of Lavansaari and on the approaches to Kronstadt.

The strengthening of the anti-submarine line in the Gulf of Finland in the spring of 1943 practically excluded the use of Baltic Fleet submarines in sea lanes. The Soviet command had quite reliable data about this, and during staff exercises it was found out that not a single boat could overcome such a barrage, but, as usual, they went by experience: the submariners were given the same tasks.

The first on the transition to Kronstadt right in the Sea Canal on a non-contact mine was blown up and sank Shch-323 by A. Andronov.

On May 7–9, a group of boats consisting of the guards Shch-303, Red Banner Shch-406 and Shch-408 departed from Lavansaari. Only one of them - Shch-303 - returned back. Having crossed the Gogland

minefields, its commander is captain 3rd rank I.V. Travkin repeatedly tried to overcome the Nargen-Porkkaludd position - the boat fell into anti-submarine nets three times - but could not do this and, having received permission, miraculously returned to Kronstadt. Two other "pikes" - captain 3rd rank E.Ya. Osipov and Lieutenant Commander P.S. Kuzmina - were discovered by the enemy and destroyed by air strikes and surface ships.

Further attempts to force the Gulf of Finland with such a density of the anti-submarine line did not make sense. In order to ensure the exit of submarines to the Baltic Sea, it was necessary either to destroy the anti-submarine line by force, or to create bypass routes, which was possible only as a result of mastering the southern or northern coast of the Gulf of Finland. The boats went on a campaign one after another and did not return. Naval commander Tributs, no mouth

389

share in the firmness of the land commanders, sent a new crew to break through.

In August, in order to reconnoiter the situation west of Gogland, the S-9 submarines under the command of Captain 3rd Rank A. Mylnikov and S-12 Captain 3rd Rank A. Bashchenko left, both were killed by mines. Submarines M-90, M-96 and M-102, which went out to reconnoiter the Gogland Reach and the Narva Bay, returned safely to the base.

They say that several senior officers of the Baltic Fleet made a petition to Moscow, which, with an opportunity, was secretly handed over to the head of the Main Naval Staff, Admiral I.S. Isakov. He reported to Stalin. And only after a call from the Supreme Commander of the Fleet, who earned the nickname "Killer" among the submariners, stopped destroying his submarine forces.

Until October 1944, the submarines of the Baltic Fleet, tightly blocked in the eastern part of the Gulf of Finland, did not go to sea.

Chapter 13 Mginskaya operation

(July - August 1943)

At the end of May 1943, Govorov and Meretskov were summoned to the Kremlin and received an order to carry out the Mginsk operation. Its idea was to inflict counter strikes by the troops of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts on the flanks of the Mginsk-Sinyavin grouping of the enemy with the aim of encircling and destroying it. General Meretskov planned the main blow with the forces of Starikov's 8th army, from east to west, in the direction of Voronovo, the village of Mikhailovsky, Mga. To ensure the left flank of the strike force, an auxiliary attack was being prepared on Karbusel, Turyshkino. The plan of General Govorov provided for the efforts of the 67th army of Dukhanov to seize the Sinyavinsky and Kelkolovsky heights, completely clear the eastern bank of the Neva in the Arbuzovo, Ivanovskoye sector and establish a common front with the 55th army and the troops of the Volkhov Front on the line of the Kirov railway.

To meet in Mga, the soldiers of the Leningrad Front had to overcome about 9 km, the Volkhov Front - 14 km, overcoming enemy fortifications, about which General Khrenov, proud of his success in building the "Volkhovskaya notch", wrote: "Hitler's defense, to put it bluntly, was in no way inferior to ours and had a sufficiently large depth.

In general, a frontal assault was being prepared again on the same German positions and strongholds that had once been Russian

391

mi villages, from the same directions, as before - on Mgu. All the difference is the new "soldiers", new "thirty-four" and increased by an order of magnitude, in qualitative and especially in quantitative terms, artillery, aviation and engineering support. One can absolutely agree with Polman's assessment: "No new ideas and goals, no breadth

intention and surprise, but only the continuation of the second battle of Ladoga, which the German command could not prevent by any countermeasures, because they did not have the necessary means for this.

And no "breadth" was required from our commanders. According to Meretskov, the Supreme Commander at the end of the conversation emphasized: "The main thing for you is not the seizure of territory, but the destruction of German divisions." The main events of the summer campaign were expected in the area of the Kursk Bulge, and Stalin pushed the affairs of Leningrad into the background. Not counting too much on the fact that without a five to tenfold superiority in forces over Kühler's troops, it would be possible to recapture MSU from the Germans, the Supreme Commander had in mind the standard tasks of auxiliary directions.

"Legends: to pin down, "bleed", not to allow the enemy to transfer forces to the central sector of the Soviet-German front. Elementary military arithmetic has long calculated that such a "destruction" of one German division would cost at least three of its own, but our command was satisfied with such a ratio of losses. The extensive method of warfare was fully developed, the death machine was debugged and worked without interruption.

"In infantry divisions," writes N.N. Nikulin, —already in 1941-1942, there was a backbone of supplymen, doctors, counterintelligence officers, staff officers, etc. People who formed a mechanism for accepting reinforcements and sending them into battle, to death. A kind of death mill. This backbone was basically preserved, getting used to its terrible functions, and the appropriate people were selected, those who could cope with such a thing. The authorities also

392

got unreasoning, or stupid, or scum, capable only of cruelty. "Forward!" - and that's it. My commander of an infantry regiment in the "native" 311th division moved to his position from the commander of the bath and laundry detachment. He turned out to be very capable of driving his regiment forward without reasoning. I ruined him many times, and in between I drank vodka and danced a gypsy girl. The commander of the German regiment that opposed us near Voronovo commanded a battalion back in 1914-1918, was a professional, knew all the intricacies of military affairs and, of course, knew how to take care of his people and kill our advancing hordes... Great Stalin, not burdened by conscience, morality, or religious motives, created an equally great party that corrupted the whole country and suppressed dissent. Hence our relationship with people. Once I accidentally overheard a conversation between the commissar and the commander of a rifle battalion who was in battle. This conversation expressed the essence of what was happening: "We'll fight for another two days, finish off the rest and go to the rear for reorganization. Let's take a walk!" Soldiers have always been manure. Especially in our great power, and especially under socialism.

I remember how General Simonyak was told: "General, you can't attack this height, we will only lose a lot of people and not succeed." Always drunk Simonyak (on the Leningrad front he was entrusted with the guards rifle corps) answered: "Just think, people. People are dust, go ahead!"

The owner from Moscow, pointing his finger at the map, orders to advance. The generals drive the regiments and divisions, and the commanders on the spot do not have the right to take the initiative. The order "Forward!", and the unrequited soldiers went to die. We went to the machine guns. Flanking? Not ordered, do what you are told. And they have not forgotten how to think and reason. They are more concerned with keeping their place and pleasing their superiors. Losses don't matter. They killed some, they will bring others. There are many people. And these people are seized in the rear, in the fields, in factories, dressed in overcoats, given wine

393

tovku and - "Forward!". And confused, frightened, demoralized, they are dying like flies...

The psychology of a person going on an assault and watching an attack is evocatively different, when he himself does not have to die, everything seems simple: forward and forward!"

Theoretically, it was assumed that the offensive of the Soviet troops would force the German command to pull large forces into the area of the Mgin'sk ledge, substituting them for concentrated fire strikes from powerful artillery and aviation groups, the Mga station was supposed to become a "magnet that attracts enemy troops to itself." In general, the operational idea resembles a well-known anecdote when a rooster runs after a hen and calms itself: "I won't catch up, I'll keep warm."

In addition, the commander of the Volkhov Front, who suspected the perfidious Germans of preparing an offensive with the aim of reaching Lake Ladoga and restoring the blockade of Leningrad, as usual, was going to thwart this assault. Meretsikov, out of nowhere, counted 68 divisions and 6 brigades in the Army Group North, "and in general, K  hler, taking into account his reserves and troops, was quartered. located in the temporarily occupied Soviet territory in the rear zone of his army group, could count on dozens of divisions.

Let's clarify: "in general" K  hler could count on 46 divisions and one brigade at his disposal at the beginning of July. Lindemann's 18th Army, mainly due to the weakening of the neighboring 16th Army, included 28 infantry, airfield, mountain rifle divisions and a Latvian SS brigade. The reserve of the commander of Army Group North included the 18th motorized, 388th training and 223rd infantry divisions. Three security divisions ensured the "new order" in the rear zone. As part of the Volkhov Front, which was opposed by 15 infantry divisions of the enemy, on 1 July there were 28 rifle | artillery division, 6 rifle, 6 tank brigades, 2 fortified areas, 5 separate tank regiments and 6 tank battalions.

394

In the area of the beating of German troops planned by the Soviet Headquarters - in the "bottleneck" - seven divisions of the 26th Army Corps dug into the ground: in the east, near Karbusel, Voronovo and Gaitolovo - by the forces of the 212th and 69th Infantry Divisions, along the Kirov railway of the 1st infantry and 5th mountain rifle. In the north, on both sides of the Wengler's Nose, stood the 290th, on the Sinyavinsky heights - the 11th division and on the Moika River - the 23rd infantry division. In reserve, Lindemann kept the 121st Infantry and 28th Jaeger Divisions. Our intelligence estimated the enemy forces at about 100 thousand people, 140-160 tanks and assault guns.

The Soviet command concentrated in the 67th and 8th armies more than 250,000 soldiers and officers, 550 tanks and self-propelled guns.

The 8th Army, having received additional formations from the reserve of the Volkhov Front, had 11 rifle divisions and 2 rifle brigades. The troops of the shock group were built in two echelons: in the first - four rifle divisions (184, 378, 256, 364th), each of them was reinforced by a tank regiment; in the second - also four rifle divisions (379, 239, 165 and 374th) and two tank brigades (16th and 122nd). The reserve consisted of the 286th Rifle Division and the 58th Rifle Brigade. Colonel Germanovich, Chief of the Army Engineering Troops, had at his disposal 11 divisional engineer battalions, three engineering brigades and two separate front-line engineer battalions. A breakthrough was planned in the area [3.5 km.

In the 67th Army, which broke through in the Arbuzovo-Sinyavino sector, there were 8 rifle and 2 cavalry divisions, a guards tank brigade, and three separate tank regiments.

Aviators of the 13th and 14th air armies, as well as long-range aviation formations - about 1000 aircraft (the Germans had 140 aircraft) were to provide support and cover for the ground troops. Only Meretskov was allowed to spend 850

thousand

395

shells and mines - more than a thousand wagons. The offensive of the Leningrad Front was preceded by a ten-day, Volkhov - five-day processing of German positions, to which only

section of the 67th Army involved about 2900 guns.

In the summer of 1943, a fashion arose in the Soviet General Staff to assign the names of Russian generals to major offensive operations. Thus, the troops of the Bryansk and Central Fronts carried out the operation "Kutuzov", which ended with the liberation of Orel, the final stage of the Battle of Kursk - "Rumyantsev", the Smolensk operation of the Kalinin and Western Fronts - "Suvorov". The offensive of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts was named in honor of the author of the famous breakthrough - "Brusilov".

On July 12, the artillery of the Leningrad Front, according to the plan of the "preparatory period", began the systematic destruction of the structures of enemy strongholds and resistance centers, the destruction of firing points, the suppression of the "most harmful" batteries, "from exhaustion" of the enemy's manpower. Effective July 17

Artillery of the Volkhov Front entered.

Finally, on July 22 at 06:35, after a powerful one and a half hour artillery and aviation preparation, two Soviet armies moved to storm. The fire was so strong that it frightened its own infantry no less than the Germans.

"An hour after the start of artillery preparation, a thick veil of smoke and dust shrouded the area," recalls Colonel D. Morozov, former head of the operations department of the artillery headquarters of the Volkhov Front. — When the artillery fire was removed from the enemy's first trench and moved to a depth of three or four hundred meters, it seemed even to experienced officers that the barrage of fire remained in its original place. As for the young infantrymen, they were completely at a loss and were afraid to raise their heads from the trench. We, the gunners, this time, as they say, overdid it. Twenty minutes have passed, and the infantry is not under

396

the division commander, Major General Fetisov, and the commander of the artillery, Keremenetsky, were nervous. And how do you keep calm in such an environment. And the infantry, stunned by the thunder of the cannonade, could not understand in any way that the artillery fire had long been removed from the objects of attack. We had to move the artillery fire even deeper and sharply weaken its density (but it was not for nothing that our infantry was afraid of their artillery?). The tanks arrived. Together with them, the infantry finally moved forward. The first enemy position was broken through in many places... The second position, two to two and a half kilometers away from the first, was not captured on the move. The infantry delayed too long with the start of the attack, the moment was lost.

Again, as in all previous operations, the slow bloody "gnawing through" of the German fortifications began.

On the Arbuzovo front, the Sinyavino station in the first echelon was attacked by three divisions of the 30th Guards Corps of General Simonyak. Partially breaking the front line, our units wedged into the German defenses, but were met with heavy fire and fierce counterattacks, and then completely thrown back to their original positions. The results of the 55th Army, which tried to assist, were even more miserable.

In the zone of the 8th Army, events developed similarly, the formations of the first echelon failed to advance beyond the first trench. At the end of the month, the 379th and 165th rifle divisions were introduced into the battle, replacing the 18th and 256th. But even after that, the situation did not change, the Soviet troops were marking time, of course, "grinding" the enemy forces along the way.

All new connections entered the fray. The fiercest battles flared up, no prisoners were taken.

General Lindemann almost immediately used his reserve - the 121st Infantry Division in the eastern sector and the 28th Chasseur Division - west of the Sinyavin Heights. Taking advantage

lack of coordination between the actions of two Soviet groups, the commander of the 18th army had time to maneuver forces, replace battered regiments and hold positions

397

on both directions of breakthroughs. On July 24, he withdrew General von Graffen's 58th Infantry Division from Leningrad and threw it into a counterattack between the Neva and Poselok No. fire from the west coast. The 254th Infantry Division was deployed from Krasny Bor. From the 16th Army, von Küchler transferred the 126th Infantry Division, which replaced the 28th Chasseurs.

On July 29, the ADD joined the operation. 333 aircraft took part in its first raid, and from 100 to 150 in subsequent raids. Meretskov complains that Colonel General A.E. Golovanov was greedy and gave the front "not so many combat vehicles." But in the report of the headquarters of the 18th German Army dated August 10 on the course of hostilities in the northeastern sector of the front, it was reported: "1110 aircraft participated in the most powerful enemy air raid on one of the days. Our aviation was able to use no more than 20 combat-ready fighters." In addition, gasoline and bombs were used indefinitely.

For fifteen days, long-range bombers. they launched air strikes on the enemy's communications, starting from Mga and Ul'yanovka and ending with Luga, Narva and Pskov.

On the night of August 11, the Soviet side activated seven more divisions. So, General Starikov introduced the 256th, 165th and 378th rifle units into battle. By the end of the next day, they occupied the Porechye stronghold. On August 12, Golovanov's long-range bombers were diverted to the central sector of the Soviet-German front.

Suddenly, "the resistance of the Nazis increased." Meretskov, according to his own statement, was pleased: "It turned out that the Nazi command completely removed from Leningrad two infantry divisions intended for the assault on the city (on September 8, 1941, von Leeb lacked 11 divisions for the assault, including three tank ones), and plugged the hole with them in order to localize the breakthrough, preventing it from turning into a wide gap. Volkhovites are happy

398

were proud of this: it was no joke, because the plan of the fascists to break through again from the south to Lake Ladoga was frustrated and the order of the Headquarters on the maximum destruction of the Nazi troops was carried out! How many own troops were destroyed, marshal Meretskov never remembered.

War, depending on where the eyewitness was, looks different. One can rejoice at the fulfillment of the instructions of the Stavka, sitting in Malaya Vishera, a hundred kilometers from the front line, one can scold the infantry from the NP of the division, which did not go on the attack, or one can look from the point of view of the "active bayonet", whose life was measured in one week, a soldier, "crawling on its belly through front-line mud."

Around this time, the 311th Kirov Division left the Pogostye area to the Apraksin station on a night march and immediately entered the battle. So, its fighters did not notice either the joyful faces of the Volkhovites, or their own artillery, which "overdid it" so much that by August 17 it had exhausted the entire supply of shells released for the operation. The division melted away in three days. The diary of a sergeant of the 1067th Infantry Regiment is strikingly different from the memoir of a proud marshal:

"August 15.

Let's go to the front. The division stretched out along the trenches. As always, confusion. Then we run, then we wait for something. Relatively quiet... took cover in a crater... At the bottom of the crater is a helmet. He kicked it with his foot - it was hard: it had half a skull in it, probably from last year. Go ahead. The trenches converge under

railway bridge, from where there is only one way - into hell. The wounded crawl towards them, bloody and dirty, with yellowish gray faces, parched lips and feverishly shining eyes. Groaning, groans, obscene language... How much longer do we have to live? They say that we will go into battle on the move, the previous division was enough for two hours. "He beats! .. Beats, bitch! - the wounded answer the questions... The ground is bumpy - a funnel to a funnel. It's hard... Hearing is tense and painfully catches every rustle. Here... It's flying! We roll head over heels into the trench, deeper, lower, into the pit,

399

hands into something sticky ... The roar of the gap, the ground falls. It's gone. We get up. Pit - toilet.

August 16th.

At night they dug into the ground not far from the Germans. We sit in holes. You can't get out and get up - it will kill you. It seems that the wind is made of fragments. In order to occupy time with something, to forget ourselves, we play an imaginary game right there: two people put machine guns out of the pit with their butt up, the one who breaks the sooner wins ... The gun was broken. The trunk is hooked.

At noon we go with a package to the rear. Three. First, crawling like snakes to the trench, and then running, further. Legs barely move, breath wheezing and whistling. You can't stop. Those who tried to rest are now lying on both sides of the trench, and the blood flows in thin black streams along the clay walls, accumulates at the bottom in sticky puddles ... The shelling begins. The Germans, obviously, have noticed us and are hitting us with surprising accuracy ...

18 August.

Haven't slept since the 14th. We sit in the same holes. The new cannon was buried deeper than the old one, and so far it is intact. One day ago . our projectile flew in from the rear and exploded five steps from us. It's good that they were in the pit ... The shell turned the dead man out of the ground, still fresh. Today he is basking in the sun and smells. There are whole layers in the earth here. At a depth of one and a half to two meters, one can find cartridges, weapons, clothes, and old felt boots. Everything is mixed... Ahead, in the neutral zone, about forty tanks. Some are red, burnt. Others are still intact, but motionless - they are shot by the Germans from heavy mortars. Flight - short flight, flight again. Fuck! A multi-ton tank shatters into pieces. What a tanker! After all, he has no right to leave the damaged car... One tank is standing close to us, in front of our trenches. He was returning from the attack when he was hit. Human entrails are wound around its tower - the remnants of the landing force that rode on it to attack. The shells intended by the Germans for this tank are flying at us. We're sinking deeper into the ground...

400

From our division for a long time there was only one number, cooks, foremen, yes we, near the gun. Soon it's our turn. Porridge again with fragments: when the food carrier crawls, the thermos on his back pierces ... The tunic and trousers have become like thick cardboard: they are crusted with blood and dirt. On the knees and elbows - holes to the naked body, crawled. He threw the helmet, few people wear them here, but there are a lot of them lying around. This item of a soldier's toilet is not used for its intended purpose. We usually shit on the helmet, then we throw it over the parapet of the trench, and the blast wave throws everything back, on our heads ... The dead man stinks unbearably. There are many around here, old and new. Some dried up to blackness, heads like those of mummies, with sparkling teeth. Others were swollen, as if ready to burst. Some inexperienced soldiers dug their shelters in the sandy walls of the trench, and the earth, having collapsed from a nearby explosion, crushed them. So they lie, curled up, as if sleeping under a thick layer of sand. A picture resembling a grave in a section. In the trench, here and there, parts of bodies trampled into the clay stick out; where is the back, where is the flattened face, where is the hand, brown, the color of the earth. We walk right through them.

August 20th.

For about a week I didn't close my eyes, and I don't want to. The last days - firing from a cannon at the squares and at flashes, that is, into the white light, crawling from end to end along the front line under fire and blood, blood, blood. There are very few people left. In the evening, the order was to push the cannon to the tip of the breakthrough to support the infantry. Our time has come! The order must be followed! Ha! Where even at night it is dangerous to walk bent over, we crowded together to our full height. There are twenty-one of us - so many, because the cannon must be carried by hand, the earth is so beaten and reared. The Germans are less than a hundred meters away, I think they can distinguish the stars on our caps. But why are they silent?... Not a single shot, as if the Germans are surprised by our wildly stupid recklessness and are waiting with interest to see what will happen.

401

then... Suddenly, a pop from behind, a push in the back lifts me into the air! I'm flying and for a hundredth of a second I think: "The end ...

22 August.

I woke up in a pit near another cannon of our battery. They brought me here yesterday. It turns out that we ran into an anti-tank mine and exploded. Of the twenty-one people, two remained: me and one slightly wounded. Seventeen people were not found. Only by chance, about forty meters from the explosion, a leg with a piece of the stomach was found. She fell on the dugout of the commander of an infantry battalion ... "

Question: who "grind" whom in this situation? The enemy, as we see, had enough shells, he spent eight times less than the Soviet gunners. Because the Germans did not shoot at the target, but at the target, they did not suppress, but destroyed, and they never did such stupid things as calculating the density of artillery barrels per kilometer of the front.

At the final stage, Lindemann from the Kirishi region transferred the 61st Infantry Division on trucks, which took over the defense zone of the 126th Division near Settlement No. 6. The Germans firmly held all positions along the entire perimeter of the "bottleneck".

In the battles for the Sinyavino Heights, the 561st special-purpose battalion, penal, deserved special fame. Battalion commander Richard Metiger was awarded the Knight's Cross. In the Wehrmacht, for criminal and war crimes, "blood atonement" was also practiced, with the only difference being that they did not separate officers from soldiers. According to German authors, more than 80 thousand people passed through the "500th" battalions.

As a result of fierce battles, the shock groups of the 67th and 8th armies only slightly penetrated the enemy defenses during the month. The tension in the conduct of hostilities began to weaken.

On August 22, Stalin ordered the further offensive to be stopped.

.402

"The Russian command," says Polman, "failed to coordinate their offensive operations in the north and east with each other in such a way as to put the German command in a very difficult position. However, it was not to be expected that in the third battle on the same battlefield new unexpected ideas regarding the management of military operations would appear.

The analysis of the former colonel of the Wehrmacht coincides with the conclusions of the commander of the Leningrad Front. True, General Govorov blamed the failure on General Meretskov:

"The main and main reason that determined the special nature of the operation was the enemy's ability to continuously restore defense by successively changing, as divisions of one defending echelon are destroyed, by divisions of the second, then the third echelon, etc. ... The enemy's ability to continuously restore defense on

Sinyavino direction is due to the unjustified calculation for interaction with the neighboring Volkhov front. The actions of the Volkhov Front did not attract the operational reserves of the enemy, which allowed the enemy to withdraw part of the forces from the Volkhov Front and send them to the Leningrad Front... According to the plan of the operation, it was assumed that the enemy's reserves would be dispersed between both fronts. In fact, all seven infantry divisions ended up in front of the Leningrad Front. Well, what can I say. Kuchler and Lindemann fought without any plan, using every opportunity to achieve victory, but who interfered with ours?

However, who is talking about failure.

Meretskov, for example, proudly reports that he "forged" 68 enemy divisions and 6 brigades that had come from nowhere and "ground" parts of 21 divisions.

At the same time, the Soviet losses amounted to about 80 thousand people killed and wounded, the enemy - about 20 thousand. Our commanders lost 2660 soldiers a day, Lindemann - 670. Having laid down four of their fighters, they killed

403

just one German. This means that the main task set by Stalin has been completed: "The formations of the 18th Army, due to heavy losses, could no longer threaten Leningrad. The Hitlerite command no longer thought about restoring the blockade, much less about storming the city. And women still give birth to Ivanov. Only the fantastic consumption of ammunition caused alarm in Moscow. The head of the artillery of the Red Army, General N.N. Voronov even sent a representative to the Volkhov Front to find out what was going on. But in the course of the investigation it became known that Comrade Stalin positively assessed the results of the operation, and the investigation was terminated. In Directive No. 30175, the Supreme Commander noted that "the troops of these two fronts drew upon themselves significant operational reserves of the enemy, inflicted heavy defeats on his troops, and thereby fulfilled part of the task assigned to these fronts."

About the "part" - the Mga station - was somehow forgotten. Its Soviet troops liberated it only on January 21, 1944. Despite the "achievements", our generals remember the Mga operation of 1943 reluctantly, and sometimes even pretend that it did not exist. For example, General Borshchev, who commanded the division, wrote: "In the summer of 1943, we fought heavy defensive battles (?) at the Sinyavin Heights."

However, Stalin had every reason to be in a good mood. The summer of 1943 became a turning point in the course of the Second World War and the Great Patriotic War: the Soviet armies began to move to the West. The victory in the Battle of Kursk was marked by the first victorious salutes. During the grandiose battle, Wehrmacht armored troops were destroyed, Orel, Belgorod, and Kharkov were liberated. The strategic initiative finally passed into the hands of the Red Army. Finland actually stopped hostilities, its government, becoming more and more convinced of the inevitable collapse of the Millennium Reich, more and more persistently made attempts to establish contacts with the leadership

404

members of the anti-Hitler coalition, probed the positions of London, Moscow and Washington regarding the conditions for concluding peace. Anglo-American troops landed in Sicily and the Apennine Peninsula, withdrawing Italy from the war and thus opening a second front in Europe.

The situation near Leningrad gradually changed to our advantage, the German "knife", abundantly irrigated with blood, more and more rusted and worn down. The position of Field Marshal Kuchler's troops, exhausted by continuous Russian attacks, deteriorated significantly. The German command could not strengthen it either at the expense of strategic reserves or by transferring forces from other army groups. Throughout 1943, for Hitler, Army Group North did not seem to exist. If the Fuhrer remembered her, it was only in order to take away the most combat-ready divisions: in the second half of the year, Kuchler had to part with the only

motorized and seven infantry divisions, in return he received five divisions, which had a large shortage in personnel and military equipment. The High Command still set the task of firmly defending positions and continuing the blockade of Leningrad, but in the rear of the army group, approximately along the line of the old border of the USSR with the Baltic states, construction began on a new defensive line - the Panther line.

In mid-September, the troops of the Leningrad Front, having overcome several hundred meters, recaptured the accursed Sinyavin Heights from the enemy. The private operation was preceded by a unique artillery preparation. General K.P. Kazakov, who arrived at the post of artillery commander of the 2nd shock army from another theater, notes in his memoirs the unusual extravagance of Leningraders in terms of spending ammunition, compared to the place of the previous service.

This surprise was caused by a new method of infantry fire support invented at the headquarters of General Odintsov - "creeping fire":

405

"In its most general form, this method of "creeping fire" was one of the methods of artillery support for the attack of rifle subunits. If, with a barrage of fire, the artillerymen, firing at the lines ahead of their infantry, transferred the fire in jumps of 100-200 meters, that is, two to four divisions of the sight, then the "creeping of fire" fully corresponded to its name - artillery fire "creeped" from the front edge of the enemy into the depth of his defense by the minimum possible transfers - 50 meters each (one division), and often this small distance was divided in two with the help of a level. Such transfers of fire were blocked by the scattering of shells, so from the observation point you do not see any jumps. Artillery fire really creeps into the depths of the enemy's defenses, weeding it clean like a good vegetable garden. Of course, it is much easier for infantry and tanks to attack on such a "cleared" terrain. The natural question is: why is this method not applied everywhere? Why did the Red Army Artillery Headquarters not recommend "creeping fire" to the artillerymen of other fronts? First, that it required a significant waste of ammunition. And our opportunities for replenishing them were not unlimited - the factories gave as many shells as they could give. And if the Main Artillery Directorate had fully satisfied the needs of one front, which widely used "creeping fire", it would have left other fronts without ammunition. That is why the Red Army Artillery Headquarters could not recommend the method of "creeping fire" for general use ... In addition, the enemy was already widely using various tricks in defense - a false front line or a deliberate withdrawal of his troops in depth. Imagine for a moment that our artillery unleashes the full force of the "creeping fire" on the empty defenses. And how to break through the enemy's defenses at the next position, when we, albeit easily, but with a huge expenditure of ammunition, will cover these three or four kilometers?

In general, it is clear that such "support" required a huge number of artillery and mortar barrels,

406

and how many shells were expended, all the main gunners, from Govorov to Kazakov, are embarrassed to say. In addition, in order to break through the next defensive position, all this equipment had to be moved three to four kilometers ahead, to equip firing positions and wait for new echelons with ammunition to arrive. And to Berlin - almost two thousand kilometers. But General Govorov liked the method, and it was he who was used in the limited-scale operation to capture the Sinyavino Heights.

On the morning of September 15, Soviet artillery and rocket launchers plowed through the German positions. Aviators of the 13th Air Army, the Air Force of the Baltic Fleet and the 2nd Air Defense Corps made 721 sorties. After preparations, following closely behind the barrage, the 30th Guards Rifle Corps moved - 45th, 63rd and 64th divisions. The attack lasted 30 minutes. During this time the guards

occupied all three lines of enemy trenches on the Sinyavinsky line, jumped over the ridge ... and ran into the fourth, on the reverse slope. The fighting continued for another three days, then came a lull.

Lindemann's army was engaged in the preparation of rear positions and the reduction of the front line in order to release troops. So, on October 2, the 290th Infantry Division left the Kruglaya grove - the Wangler's Nose. This ledge of the front, named after the outstanding commander of the 366th regiment, Colonel Wengler, was one of the worst positions, the "Devil's Hole" among swamps and shredded stumps. Everyone, from company commanders to the commander-in-chief of the army group, believed that he should have been abandoned long ago, but Hitler until then rejected such proposals as "defeatist, until the enemy finally forced him to clear this position."

On the night of October 3, the Germans began the withdrawal of troops from the western face of the Pogostya ledge and the evacuation of the Kirishi bridgehead, which they held for about two years. The commander of the 4th Army discovered this maneuver only two days later, overslept. Meretskov later stated, What

407

difficult weather conditions interfered: "The Kirishi swamps swelled from the water under the October rains. While we were building a crossing in order to strike at the retreating enemy, he crawled away to the left bank of the Volkhov. Front-line aviation still managed to bomb it. In a word, Lindemann managed to withdraw units across the Tigoda River without hindrance and almost without loss.

"The Russians did not immediately detect the withdrawal of German troops," Polman writes. "Only after strong artillery preparation did they occupy the positions already abandoned by the Germans and in the reports of the High Command portrayed this as a successful offensive operation on a large scale with a fantastic number of trophies and losses."

After the embarrassment that occurred, the command of the Volkhov Front decided that the enemy had launched a general retreat and threw the 54th Army into resolute pursuit. However, it soon ran into a rear position held by the 96th Infantry Division, and by October 15, after fierce attacks and counterattacks, the offensive bogged down. However, all these small tactical successes did not bring much benefit to Lindemann: almost all the released divisions were sent to other sectors of the front. In October and November, the 58th, 69th, 290th, 81st, 132nd and 23rd Infantry Divisions left the 18th Army. The 5th Mountain Infantry went to Italy. For political reasons, the Blue Division had to be returned to General Franco. As a result of many months of fighting, the army lost 166 thousand people killed, wounded and captured.

On October 17, the last German bomb fell on Leningrad.

By the end of 1943, Georg Lindemann, who defended the area from Lake Ilmen to the Gulf of Finland, had 19 divisions, including 5 airfield divisions, and 3 brigades. Kuchler again and again tried to persuade Hitler to withdraw troops to the Panther line, but the Fuhrer, in principle, did not want to give anything voluntarily. German divisions celebrated the last Christmas near Leningrad. In the Soviet Headquarters at that time, the development was already completed and under

408

preparations for a grandiose strategic operation involving four fronts, which was to end in the complete defeat of Army Group North and the Red Army's entry into the Baltic states. The first stage of the operation was to be the complete lifting of the blockade of Leningrad. Groupings were created on the flanks of the 18th Army, outnumbering the enemy three to one in manpower and five to one in equipment. On January 14, 1944, the First Stalinist strike struck.

FINALLY

By January 30, Soviet troops had broken through the enemy defenses on the front from the Gulf of Finland to Lake Ilmen, inflicting a defeat on the German 18th Army. In the southern direction, the enemy was driven back from Leningrad by 100 km, in the western direction by 80 km. Lindemann's army broke up into two isolated groups: the main one, retreating to Luga, and the western one, retreating to Narva. On January 27, in honor of the complete lifting of the blockade over the Neva, a victorious salute thundered. And that was the most successful phase of the operation.

Then the Germans again began to act "not according to plan." As a result, the troops of the Volkhov Front failed to capture Luga within the established time frame, and this allowed the enemy to withdraw his forces in an organized manner from the Mgin'sk ledge, from the Chudovo and Lyuban regions. The troops of the Leningrad Front were unable to surround the adversary in the area of Tosno and Pavlovsk. Throughout February, the most difficult battles went on north and east of Luga, the Germans were simply and unpretentiously forced out of the occupied territories, they systematically retreated to the west and entrenched themselves on the Panther line. Narva, Pskov, Ostrov could not be liberated;

more so.

On March 1, 1944, the offensive had to be stopped. As a result, 3 airfield divisions were completely destroyed, and 7 enemy divisions were routed. But the Soviet losses also exceeded all previous "indicators" - 314 thousand people. The complete liberation of the Leningrad region took place only in June-July 1944, when during the Vyborg-Petrozavodsk Opera

410

The Leningrad and Karelian fronts defeated the Finnish army, losing 91,000 soldiers and officers in the process. The Red Army still fought with great bloodshed, in a different way.

she could not.

The war for Leningrad is over.

The total losses in it of the Northern, Northwestern, Leningrad, Karelian, Volkhov fronts and the Baltic Fleet from July 1941, when the first battles began on the Luga line, to August 1944, which brought L. Govorov the rank of marshal, amounted to about 3 million fighters and commanders, including almost a million - irrevocable.

To this day, the Nevsky Piglet, Sinyavino, Gaitolovo, Gortolovo, Mishkino, Voronovo, Porechye, Korbusel, Pogostye, Kirishi, Myasnoy Bor and many other places and villages swept off the face of the earth, repeating the words of the "Volkhovite" D. TO. Zherebov, are a giant necklace of cemeteries covering St. Petersburg from the east within a radius of sixty to one hundred kilometers.

"We remember the rampart of corpses almost as tall as a man, which we had to overcome when attacking the Sinyavin Heights. We remember the swamp in front of the village of Gaitolovo, filled with dead bodies. The attackers ran along them, like along the gati. We remember the "Round" grove, once famous on the Volkhov front; divisions of the 2nd shock army perished near it... We remember the rest house in the village of Voronovo, the Lesnaya height - the "height of death", as the soldiers called it... We could list the names of the heights and strongholds for a long time. Losses near each of them exceeded, for example, the victims of the battle of Borodino... Corpses, corpses! How many of them are left on our way!"

We should have lost this war, but we were right and they were wrong.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	deniya eti itanunaayaneno 5	Chapter 1. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE RKKA IN THE BALTICS	8	Chapter 2. THE TALLINN	48	Chapter 3
BREAKTHROUGH OF THE KBF ON THE APPROACHES TO LENINGRAD ..	66	Chapter 4. THE STORM OF LENINGRAD	97	Chapter 5. BLOCKADE AND COUNTER-BLOCKADE	128	Chapter 6. EVACUATION OF HANKO
128	Chapter 7. WINTER OFFENSIVE OF RKKA	204	Chapter 8. LIUBAN OPERATION	237	Chapter 9. Ust-Tosno- SINYAVINSK OPERATION	291
Chapter 10. THE BALTIC FLEET IN 1942	333	Chapter 11. OPERATION "ISKRA"	345	Chapter 12	MGINSK OPERATION	391
In conclusion	her eeee	410				

of the year". A new look at the tragedy of the Leningrad Blockade. The terrible truth about the longest and most cruel battle of the Great Patriotic War,

__ lasted more than two years and claimed millions of lives. Refuting the official Soviet version of the "defense of Leningrad", this book proves that in fact there was no defense, that the battle for Leningrad was "one continuous offensive of the Red Army, unthinkable bloody, unsuccessful, often senseless, who participated in this massacre the troops of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts never defended themselves. They kept advancing. For months, the Soviet armies attacking in the same directions suffered huge losses, which increased tenfold due to the lack of training of our troops, the poor professional training of fathers-commanders, and disregard for human life. The battle for Leningrad lasted three years and cost us three million killed, missing, and wounded servicemen. More

one million died in the city itself..." This book of the Second __ sheds light for the first time on the most terrible World War massacre, which surpassed even the infamous "Rzhev meat grinder" in terms of losses, is still a huge cemetery, covering the city in a radius of tens of kilometers ...

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